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# Coaching Equestrian Vaulting: The Motivation Behind Volunteer Coaching

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COACHING EQUESTRIAN VAULTING:  
THE MOTIVATION BEHIND VOLUNTEER COACHING

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctorate of Philosophy  
Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

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by  
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December 2012

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to identify the primary motivations for people to become and continue as equestrian vaulting coaches. Using a nomothetic context for research, this study focused on gaining a better understanding of equestrian vaulting coaches by identifying factors that generally motivate their participation in the sport. The first research question related to what motivates someone to become a vaulting coach while the second question related to what motivates these coaches to continue in the coaching role.

Fifteen female coaches were selected for interviews from the American Vaulting Association membership. Interview questions were based on a preliminary survey and were designed to expand upon general motivational data. The resulting information showed strong support for the voluntary nature that drives vaulting coaches to initiate and sustain their action. Motivations for becoming a coach centered on intrinsic factors while motivations to continue as a coach centered on vaulter (athlete) success. Aside from contributing to the growing research literature related to the motivation of coaches and to the sport of equestrian vaulting overall, many avenues are provided for this research to be applied to the management of volunteer coaches by sports organizations.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Although current sports research seems to be predominately focused on how coaches motivate their athletes, the importance of understanding the motivations and experiences of volunteer sport coaches is gaining researcher interest and momentum (Rainey, 1999). Trends indicate that while athlete participation continues to increase, volunteer coaching numbers are declining (Cuskelly, 2004). The significant attrition rate of coaches, documented in a variety of sport settings, is just one example of the trends being identified by researchers (Deacon, 2001). For any sports program to be sustainable there must be a way to maintain current coaches, and for the sport to grow there must be a continuous influx of new coaches. In other words, the attrition rates of participants, coaches and athletes, must be below or equal to the entry rate. Creating a situation where the development of positive, effective coaches outpaces attrition can be a challenge for any sport, but it is particularly difficult for unique sports that are not part of the mainstream culture, such as equestrian vaulting.

The high majority of vaulting coaches engage in the sport on a leisure level. That is, although they may receive some remuneration for their work, it is not enough for them to declare their involvement a profitable venture, hence classifying them as volunteer coaches. Volunteers, including coaches, are essential to the management and implementation of sport programs (Green & Chalip, 2004). Maintaining the involvement of volunteers or ensuring that the number of new volunteers outpaces attrition rate is a

key element in sustaining and growing many sport programs. Therefore, understanding vaulting coaches as volunteers is important to the overall context of understanding the motivation of these coaches.

Coaches, and youth sport organizations as a whole, may have varying expectations for volunteer roles and responsibilities. Each individual organization attracts volunteers of different backgrounds resulting in potentially unique sets of motivations for continued volunteerism. Exploring volunteer motivations in various sports and sport settings has been indicated as an important need by numerous researchers; however, minimal research has been conducted in this area (Kim, Zhang, & Connaughton, 2010). Examining the motivations of vaulting coaches contributes to filling this research gap.

Experiences as an athlete can motivate people to get involved as coaches and mentors. However, athlete experiences typically provide little preparation for taking on the organizational and management responsibilities of a coach (Clark, 2001). If the motivational forces behind the engagement of becoming a coach can be identified, these elements can then be integrated into the recruitment strategies for gaining and sustaining new coaches. This information can be especially valuable for lesser-known sports, like equestrian vaulting. Knowing what motivates someone to coach vaulting may provide insightful contributions to proactively grow the sport as a whole.

### Theoretical Framework

One commonly used paradigm that may help to understand coaching motivation is the social cognitive paradigm. Considered to be a relatively new paradigm, the social cognitive paradigm importantly contains both behavioral and cognitive concepts and



processes. One of the first social cognitive theorists, Walter Mischel states that this paradigm explains the processes that direct and influence the actions that people take part in (1990). This belief reflects the popularity of basing motivational research within this paradigm. The social cognitive paradigm provides a motivational framework in which we can study the processes that influence volunteer coaching motivation.

Motivation is a concept that “refers to the forces that initiate, direct, and sustain human behavior” (Iso-Ahola, 1985, p. 20). In other words, motivation is the invisible factor that drives one to engage in a specific action or behavior, such as the decision to be a vaulting coach. One of the most prominent theories used in connection to the social cognitive paradigm, is the self-determination theory. Self-determination theory (SDT) states that there are three psychological needs that are important in engaging action: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). These three motivational influences may be affected by either intrinsic or extrinsic sources.

People who are intrinsically motivated have a personal desire to perceive themselves as competent and self-determined, focus on mastery of their skills, and want to feel that they have succeeded in their tasks. When the achievement of these personal desires is perceived to be its own reward, intrinsic motivation has occurred (Martens, 1990). People who are motivated through extrinsic sources engage in activities in order to achieve some type of tangible reward. SDT encompasses four mini-theories that span the intrinsic-extrinsic continuum. One of these mini-theories, cognitive evaluation theory (CET), concentrates on intrinsic sources of motivation. Since volunteer motivation is

closely associated with intrinsic motivation sources and with cognitive evaluation theory, this theory is an appropriate foundation for this research.

CET focuses on the intrinsic motivational aspects of autonomy, competence, informational feedback, and task orientation. This theory proposes that people evaluate their level of engagement in terms of how well it meets their perceived needs to feel competent and in control (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Therefore, CET is an effective basis for determining the motivations of being an equestrian vaulting coach.

Coaching the sport of equestrian vaulting involves a number of different knowledge and skill sets – horses (training, lunging, gaits, general care, trailering, etc.), gymnastics (strength, stretch), dance (movement, choreography, lifts), music (rhythm, interpretation), overall fitness, nutrition, and general health and safety. Finding coaches who can work across these knowledge and skill sets can be daunting. Due to the mix of sports that vaulting is derived from, there is not a natural path from which coaches emerge. The complexity of this sport may make it difficult for someone without a background in one or more of the primary skills sets, and an interest in the others, to feel confident in their ability to become a competent coach. Coaching vaulting is unique due to both the cross training it requires and its relative anonymity. This uniqueness creates a challenge for vaulting organizations to train and develop volunteer coaches.

Although there are a number of training and development programs for vaulting coaches, the number of active coaches has remained fairly linear over the past decade. Growth rates have not exceeded attrition rates, based on membership numbers provided by the American Vaulting Association (Benjamin, 2007). Marketing and promotion

efforts by the American Vaulting Association (AVA) have yet to generate a substantial growth in vaulting coaches. Research has not been conducted to identify the specific reasons as to why coaches get involved with equestrian vaulting or why the growth of coaches in this sport is stagnate. If the number of vaulting coaches does not grow, the growth of athlete participants could be hindered and that could result with the sport fading into obscurity. No matter how many athletes are interested in equestrian vaulting, without coaches, the sport cannot be sustained.

Another unique aspect in the sport of equestrian vaulting is the common perception of the high cross-over rate of coaches who teach multiple approaches to vaulting - competitive, recreational, and therapeutic levels - although the numbers have never been formally analyzed. Scant research has been identified that conducts comparisons between all three of these different coaching approaches in equestrian vaulting or in any other sport. It is not known if coaching different approaches of vaulting involves different motivations to coach. One key aspect that may link these motivations together is the volunteerism aspect of coaching.

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to identify the primary motivations for people to become and continue as equestrian vaulting coaches. Using a nomothetic context for research, this study focused on gaining a better understanding of equestrian vaulting coaches by identifying factors that generally motivate their participation in the sport. The first research question related to what motivates someone to become a vaulting coach while the second question related to what motivates these coaches to continue in the coaching role. Coaching motivation has not been studied within the sport of vaulting,

and investigating the similarities and differences within various approaches to coaching has had little examination in any sport. The research for this study is founded on a preliminary quantitative survey (see appendix A) and focuses on a qualitative series of interviews.

### Limitations

This study has two key limiting factors: coverage error and researcher bias. The interview participant selection process, a convenience sample, has potentially high coverage error. By only using coaches who are registered members in the national sports organization for vaulting, which has historically had a focus on cultivating a competitive membership, the results may be heavily skewed by competitive motivations. This limits the accuracy of those involved with no interest in competition and who are solely coaching recreational and/or therapeutic vaulters. This could greatly influence reasons behind coaching motivations.

As with any qualitative study, research bias is a limiting factor. As an insider to the sport of equestrian vaulting for twenty years, the researcher has personal experiences and relationships that have shaped her perceptions. These perceptions may influence the interpretation of motivations and the co-constructions of shared meanings.

## Definitions

*Therapeutic Vaulting:* Includes hippotherapy, adaptive instruction, equine-facilitated psychotherapy, and other therapeutic instruction. [Note. Hippotherapy includes the horse in physical, occupational, or speech therapy sessions. Equine-facilitated psychotherapy refers to the inclusion of the horse in a psychotherapy session (Vidrine, Owen-Smith, & Faulkner, 2002).]

*American Vaulting Association (AVA):* The national organization in the United States that governs the sport of vaulting. The AVA is an affiliate of USEF.

*Competitive Vaulting:* Defined as events termed “Recognized” by the American Vaulting Association in which standardized judging policies are utilized.

*Equestrian Vaulting (Vaulting):* The sport of dance and gymnastics on the back of a moving horse.

*Lunger (Lunging):* Title of the person who handles and controls the horse during vaulting. The activity of handling and controlling the horse is called lunging.

*Recreational Vaulting:* Using vaulting as an aid to improve riding skills, vaulting as a leisure activity, camp programs that incorporate vaulting activities, and informal competitions and game days.

*United States Equestrian Federation (USEF):* The United States national governing and oversight body of all equestrian sports. USEF is the official liaison to international equestrian governing bodies.

*Vaulter:* Term used for the athlete who engages in the sport of vaulting.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Leisure is an important component of lifestyle and an individual's leisure may "have more impact on the quality of life than any other area of behavior or experience" (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 7). Leisure studies attempt to understand what people do, why they do it, and what the impact of their participation is, along with understanding best management practices for the environments in which leisure activities take place (Caldwell, 2005). The review of the literature provides a background for understanding leisure through the lens of volunteer sports coaching and the intrinsic motivations of these volunteer coaches. An overview of equestrian vaulting is also provided.

#### Leisure

Serious, casual, and project-based activities are the three primary types of leisure (Stebbins, 2011). Serious leisure is defined as "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge" (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 68). Stebbins (2011) defines casual leisure "as immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity, requiring little or no special training to enjoy it" (p.239). Project-based leisure is defined as "a short-term, reasonably complicated, one-off or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time, or time free of disagreeable obligation" (Stebbins, 2011, p.240).

Serious leisure activity has been shown to have protective factors that contribute to the well-being of the individual participating in the leisure activity. These factors include: engagement in activities that are personally meaningful, fulfilling the need for social support including creating new or strengthening existing friendships and being socially accepted by others, developing one's sense of competence and increasing one's self-efficacy. Derived from participation, these factors can create experiences of challenge, a sense of oneness with the activity, along with feelings of autonomy and control (Caldwell, 2005). These protective factors easily relate to both motivations for and benefits received from leisure participation.

Leisure participation has been described in a variety of ways. Participation experiences can be arranged into four primary categories: types of activity, free time, the meaning of the experience, or as some combination of activity, time and experience (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 7). Leisure that focuses on activity and time are considered objective leisure phenomena, while subjective leisure phenomena focuses on the meaning of the experience (see figure 1). From the research perspective leisure can be external, defined by others e.g. the researcher, or internal, defined by the self e.g. the participant. The leisure lens for this research is subjective and internal, focusing on the meaning of the experience and defined by the participant.

Figure 1. Approaches to defining leisure (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 54)

<b>Type of Phenomena</b>	<b>External</b>	<b>Internal</b>
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity, setting or time period</b> is defined by the <i>researcher</i> as leisure or non-leisure.	<b>Activity, setting or time period</b> is defined by the <i>participant</i> as leisure or non-leisure.
<b>Subjective</b>	<b>Experience, satisfaction or meaning</b> associated with involvement is defined by the <i>researcher</i> as leisure or non-leisure.	<b>Experience, satisfaction or meaning</b> associated with involvement is defined by the <i>participant</i> as leisure or non-leisure.

#### Volunteerism as Leisure

Stebbins (2011) defines volunteering as “uncoerced help offered either formally or informally with no or, at most, token pay and done for the benefit of both other people and the volunteer” (p. 239). Volunteering is a leisure choice (Strigas & Jackson, 2003) and volunteering is frequently viewed as a form of serious leisure. Mannell and Kleiber (1997) even include volunteer activity in their definition of serious leisure. People seek leisure activities that are based on the activities’ ability to make one feel autonomous and empowered while providing social interactions and networks (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). When these psychological needs of self-determination and self-expression are not met in



home life or the work place, they may become a contributing factor in the selection of one's serious leisure activities.

Most people engage in leisure activities, like being a volunteer coach, out of some sense of personal choice. The choice may be driven by an inherent interest which makes it intrinsically motivating, or by self-endorsement because it serves some future purpose. There is a perceived freedom or sense of autonomy in choice that usually drives leisure. These activities may become one of the most important contexts in which one can feel that their actions are personally meaningful and truly authentic (Caldwell, 2005). The leisure activity of volunteering is assumed to be meaningful because it promotes intrinsic motivation and personal interest, making it contextually meaningful for self-determined and autonomous for choices and behavior.

Aside from allowing one to explore or engage in a personal interest while having fun, volunteering as leisure may provide participants with a sense of purpose. Volunteerism can create a deep sense of personal fulfillment (Stebbins & Graham, 2004). Volunteering allows one flexibility in the type of activities they select and the time period in which activities are performed. This provides volunteers with a wide range of physical, social and mental well-being benefits that can cater to those with differing abilities and backgrounds (O'Brien, Townsend, & Ebdon, 2010). Many volunteer roles offer participants special career opportunities or a distinctive set of rewards; this is another reason why volunteering can be framed as serious leisure.

Many volunteer roles include specific expectations of being in a certain place, at a certain time, to perform a certain duty (Stebbins & Graham, 2004). Over the past two

decades there has been a significant increase in the recognition of time, effort and contributions made by volunteers (Cuskelly, Harrington & Stebbins, 2003). This recognition can be seen in the numerous measurement tools now designed to quantify the value of volunteers. Various educational and training opportunities have been designed to offer some form of support, in lieu of significant financial compensation, to volunteers within sport and leisure related fields. Stebbins and Graham (2004) acknowledge that while there are occasional instances where volunteers are paid, these stipends are much too small to financially sustain one's livelihood or to significantly contribute to one's financial success. Therefore, the majority of sport coaches serve as volunteer coaches.

It must be noted that volunteers' situation differs from that of paid workers in many substantial ways. When one is not dependent upon an organization for their financial livelihood, they are less likely to feel powerless in their behavior and attitude (Stebbins & Graham, 2004). Pearce (1993) suggests that this creates conditions where social expectations and organizational values are less defined than they are for the paid worker. This allows volunteers a degree of individual independence and freedom, where their own intrinsic motivations have a greater influence on their behavior.

Due to the intrinsic rewards of voluntary activity, volunteers demonstrate high levels of attitude and commitment (Cuskelly, 1995). Volunteers self-select the activities they participate in and the amount of involvement they have with the activities. Therefore, it can be inferred that the volunteer's beliefs about the activity have a causal relationship to involvement. This gives support to the belief that attitudinal approaches to volunteer commitment and behaviors are appropriate areas of research (Cuskelly & Boag,

2001). In other words, one's attitudes toward coaching may influence commitment to coaching.

Volunteer motivations include the desire to interact with others having similar interests, and to further education and knowledge. The fulfillment of these desires also works to support commitment (Cuskelly, 1995). Therefore it stands to reason that the social aspects of volunteering and desired methods of learning about an activity should be considered within research approaches. A study that investigates both the desire for coaching education along with the desired method of obtaining this knowledge would benefit the literature.

Leisure pursuits, such as volunteering, can improve an individual's lifestyle by providing significant social and human capital benefits (Graham, 2004). Coaching involves developing relationships and sharing of knowledge and skills. By its nature, coaching provides volunteers with social interactions. Commitment to and achievement of these interactions may influence motivation and satisfaction.

Motivation and satisfaction are two popular research approaches in leisure studies (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Leisure motivation and satisfaction constructs are frequently used to explore and explain a wide variety of leisure experiences, including sport participation and sport volunteering. For sport volunteers, levels of motivation and satisfaction have been connected to the intersection of volunteer function, volunteer job setting, and level of volunteer job enjoyment (Silverberg, 2004). Satisfaction also reinforces initiative. Initiative is strengthened when internal motivation and engagement occur over a long period of time (Watts & Caldwell, 2008). Therefore, understanding

motivation and satisfaction of the volunteer experience are critical to continued involvement in coaching.

Although volunteerism situations and settings can differ, the motivations of volunteers are typically studied as a universal concept. In other words, volunteers have been regarded as a collective group, regardless of the setting in which the volunteering occurs (Kim, Zhang & Connaughton, 2010). Knope and Prensky (1984) classified volunteer motives into three categories: utilitarian, affective and normative. Utilitarian incentives refer to indirect benefits, affective incentives relate to interpersonal relationships and normative incentives focus on altruistic motives. Other researchers have classified volunteer motives into six categories: values, understanding, social, career-related, and protective or enhancement (Clary & Snyder, 1999).

Backman, Wicks and Silverberg (1997) identified three volunteer motivational dimensions: altruism, internally satisfying and co-production. Silverberg (2004) noted that the fulfillment of these motivational categories and dimensions contribute to the volunteers' happiness and their commitment to the organization. Happiness and satisfaction are both attitudinal aspects connected to a volunteer's commitment to an activity.

A recurring theme in volunteer motivation research is that volunteers' behaviors do not depend solely on the person or the situation. Behavior depends on the dynamic interaction of the person and the situation (Clary & Snyder, 1999). This interaction makes the understanding of volunteerism a complex undertaking and reinforces the need for motivation inquiry to be subjectively internal.

## Motivation

The social cognitive paradigm, which is considered to be relatively new, is based in the behavioral and trait paradigms (Prussia & Kinicki, 1996) and is commonly used to study motivation. The social cognitive paradigm contains both behavioral concepts and cognitive processes. Walter Mischel, who is considered to be one of the first social cognitive theorists, argues that this paradigm centers on the decision making processes that guide people's behavior (1990). Mischel's argument represents the popular reasoning of basing motivational research within the social cognitive paradigm.

The paradigm is based on the belief that feedback about one's performance affects three process mediators, which in turn influence motivated behavior. The process factors are self-efficacy, personal goals and self-evaluation (Bandura, 1997). In the social cognitive paradigm, individuals are viewed having ownership and control over their cognition, motivation, actions, and emotions, as opposed to being passive victims of the environment around them. Individuals have the ability to use forethought, self-reflection, and self-regulation to control their own behavior (Feltz, Short, & Sullivan, 2008). These abilities that control behavior are all reflections of performance feedback and intricately linked to the paradigms process mediators.

Generally speaking, motivation is a concept that is formed in the subconscious, and this makes it very difficult to assess. The term "motivation" was originally derived from the Latin word *movere*, which means, "to move." During the twentieth century, most definitions generally centered on three common elements which may be said to describe the concept of motivation: "(1) what energizes human behavior; (2) what directs

such behavior; and (3) how this behavior is sustained” (Steers & Porter, 1983, p.23). In other words, motivation can be characterized by energy, direction and persistence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The interaction of these three characteristics has led to motivation often being described as the source of energy that leads to action or involvement.

Motivation is highly valued because of its consequences: motivation produces action. “It is therefore of preeminent concern to those in roles such as manager, teacher, coach, and others that involve mobilizing others” (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Understanding a person’s needs and how to meet these needs is an important component of motivation. Understanding the motivation of sport coaches is essential to developing and supporting these volunteers.

The needs that drive motivation are typically divided into two primary categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Deci and Ryan (1985a), intrinsic motivation comes from an internal need to simply be engaged in an activity. Martens (1990) states that intrinsically motivated people have an inner desire to be competent, autonomous, and evaluate their success by how well they master the task. Iyenger and Lepper (1999) state that traditional beliefs and decades of psychological research have linked the ability to choose with increased levels of intrinsic motivation, along with sustained effort, greater satisfaction, and better outcomes.

Extrinsic motivation comes from an external need to be engaged in an activity in order to obtain something. It is driven by positive and negative reinforcement that other people provide while fulfilling the need for a response from others. These reinforcements or awards may be tangible items such as trophies or money, or intangible items, such as

praise or public recognition. In extrinsic motivation, there is an external force that influences or controls one's behavior. Typically, when one feels controlled by others the behavior itself lacks personal meaning. When this situation occurs, people can be described as alienated from the activity (Deci & Flaste, 1995).

As depicted in Figure 2, Vallerand (1997) explains that intrinsic motivation can be put into three categories: the motivation to know, the motivation to accomplish, and the motivation to experience. Similarly, extrinsic motivation can be put into four categories: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Volunteering aligns with intrinsic motivation as it allows one to fulfill their innate need to know, accomplish, and experience.

Figure 2. Dimensions of Motivation

<b><u>Intrinsic</u></b> <b>By or in itself</b>	<b><u>Extrinsic</u></b> <b>Influenced by something outside of the self</b>
1. To Know ( <i>fulfills the need for competence</i> )	1. External Regulation ( <i>feeling forced into action</i> )
2. To Accomplish ( <i>fulfills the need for autonomy</i> )	2. Introjected Regulation ( <i>freely performing action but not accepting its value</i> )
3. To Experience ( <i>fulfills the need for relatedness</i> )	3. Identified Regulation ( <i>accepting its value as personally important</i> )
	4. Integrated Regulation ( <i>merging identification with another aspect of one's self</i> )

Nowadays, psychologists generally identify two key aspects when describing motivation: intensity and direction. Intensity indicates how engaged or energized the person is, or how much effort goes into achieving a specific outcome. Direction represents how the outcomes are selected (Martens, 1990). Motivation requires that people see a relationship between their behavior and their desired outcome. If people do not believe that their behavior will lead to something they desire, they will not be motivated. The desired outcomes can be intrinsic satisfactions or extrinsic rewards. People have to believe that the desired outcomes will result from their behavior or they will not be motivated to engage in the behavior (Deci & Flaste, 1995).

### Intrinsic Motivation

In relation to coaching, examples of intrinsic motivation might include coaching in an effort to increase one's own knowledge of the sport and its dynamics, coaching to increase one's professional success and the pride of having one's athletes succeed, or coaching for the pure pleasure and excitement that is derived from the action of coaching itself. Examples of extrinsic motivation might include coaching one's own child due to the lack of an available coach, an employer adding coaching to a horseback riding instructor's job responsibilities, coaching to improve one's diversity of skills, or coaching in order to uphold one's sense of image.

Intrinsic motivation is believed to express a high degree of autonomy, as it involves activity being pursued simply because of a personal interest or pleasure in performing the activity (Gagne & Guardia, 2009). Being autonomous means acting in agreement with one's self; it means having an innate willingness to engage in an activity



and feeling free from outside influence when choosing to engage in that activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). When autonomous, people embrace the activity they have chosen for themselves with a sense of interest and commitment. This creates an authentic performance as the actions are a reflection of one's sense of self (Deci & Flaste, 1995). Intrinsic motivation describes a natural desire for assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration. These ingredients are essential to cognitive and social development. Throughout life, intrinsic motivation can be represented by a principle source of enjoyment and vitality (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In a world filled with choices and opportunities, motivation is an indicator of individual differences (Hart & Albarracin, 2009). Those who choose to coach equestrian vaulting, are choosing that action over other opportunities. Deci and Ryan (2000) state that determining whether people engage in a behavior out of personal interests and values, or engage for external purposes, has significance in every culture and represents a basic function of how people make sense of their own behavior and the behavior of others.

According to Deci and Ryan (1985a), when people are intrinsically motivated, they are more likely to exert effort and persistence in the activity. This is due to the interest and enjoyment they gain from the experience. Researchers have consistently used the indicators of interest, enjoyment, effort, and persistence as measures of intrinsic motivation, but Ferrer-Caja and Weiss (2000) assert that these indicators are better described as outcomes of intrinsic motivation. They state that a central aspect in supporting a person's intrinsic motivation is the provision of choice. Meaningful choice

encourages people to personally and willingly endorse what they are doing; it pulls them into an activity on an emotional level and creates a strong sense of autonomy. When people are provided with choice, it leaves them feeling respected and gives them then sense that they have been responded to as individuals (Deci & Flaste, 1995).

“Perhaps no single phenomenon reflects the positive potential of human nature as much as intrinsic motivation - the inherent novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capacities, to explore, and to learn” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p.69). Those studying intrinsic motivation have clearly demonstrated a link between the ability to choose and human motivation. Prominent analysis of this link has virtually equated intrinsic motivation with individual choice and personal self-determination (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Freely making a choice provides one the opportunity to express their internal beliefs, values to fulfill one’s sense of individuality and uniqueness. Individual choice and personal autonomy are believed to be closely intertwined with one’s sense of self-identity (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999) as a volunteer and as a coach.

Intrinsic motivation is characterized by rich experiences, stronger conceptual understanding, higher creativity and effective problem solving (Deci & Flaste, 1995). These characteristics are all utilized in the coaching the unique sport of equestrian vaulting. Therefore, any theory used to study volunteer coaching motives should have a strong foundation in intrinsic motivation.

### Self-Determination Theory

Experiences that allow for self-determination can enhance intrinsic motivation. When people are self-determining, they have the freedom to make their own choices and

have the opportunity to become involved with the activity in a meaningful manner. At such times, the motivational cause for action is perceived to be internal. People understand the activity to be something they want to do for the simple purpose of being engaged with that specific activity (Ryan & Deci, 2002). The opportunity for self-determination allows people to focus on their intrinsic motivations and strengthens their perceptions of self.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is based in the belief that all individuals have a basic, innate, and evolving tendency to continually develop and expand a detailed and singular sense of one's self. This tendency toward wholeness of self involves both autonomy and voluntariness (Ryan & Deci, 2002). SDT states the three psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are important factors to the energizing of human action (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).

According to SDT, autonomy refers to that which one perceives as the source of one's behavior. Autonomy is concerned with actions derived from interest and values (Deci & Ryan, 1985b). In other words, one chooses to act based on one's personal beliefs and areas of interest. The choices one makes are freely selected. When autonomous, individuals experience their behavior as an expression of one's self (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

Competence refers to feeling a sense of effectiveness in one's ability to interact with the social environment and to experience opportunities that allow one to express and utilize one's skills and talents (Ryan & Deci, 2002). The need for competence is what drives people to pursue activities that develop their skills while helping them to increase

their skill level and skill execution (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). Competence is not an acquired skill or ability, but an inner perception of confidence and expertise in one's performance.

Relatedness refers to a sense of connectedness to others, to want to care and be cared for by others, and to have a feeling of belongingness both with other individuals and with one's community. Relatedness is a reflection of the community aspect of human society and the desire to connect with and be important to and accepted by others (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). The psychological need to feel a part of something larger than the self has less to do with wanting a specific recognition and more to do with wanting a sense of unity with others (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

SDT suggests that these three needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness influence motivation. When individuals freely participate in activities, they are meeting their need for autonomy. When a skill is challenging yet achievable, an individual will develop feelings of increased competence. When individuals have opportunities to engage with others they are meeting their need for relatedness. In choosing to be a volunteer coach, the needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness can all be met. By triggering needs and applying specific factors, SDT research has been able to identify and examine the individual factors in social environments that engender self-motivation and well-being across diverse settings, situations and cultures (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Research on these aspects of SDT provides a foundation for studying the motivation of volunteer coaches.

Increased self-perceptions of competence and self-determination create a state of intrinsic motivation. Therefore, intrinsic motivation is a key outcome of self-

determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In application, the self-determination theory focuses on how intrinsic motivation influences people to develop, persist and even compete in sports and other activities (Frederick & Ryan, 1995). When an individual has freely chosen to engage in a sport at the appropriate level of difficulty, they feel challenged and efficacious. These feelings of competence and autonomy may be the internal motivation behind an athlete who repetitively practices a skill until the action is perfected, or to practice a sport for countless hours with no apparent tangible reward (Federick-Recascino & Schuster-Smith, 2003).

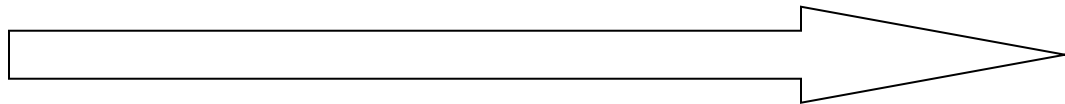
As outlined in Figure 3, SDT suggests that effective behavior and behavior change not only requires people to feel autonomous when engaging in the behavior, they need also to perceive themselves as competent to perform the behavior in a way that produces the desired outcomes (Halvari, Ulstad, Bagoien, & Skjesol, 2009). Autonomy and competence are key elements of the self-determination theory. People tend to choose to engage in activities in which they feel they are either competent or can develop competence, this increases the likelihood they will feel competent and self-efficacious (Caldwell, 2005). Many researchers have made strong connections between volunteer activities and SDT due to the allowance for choice and based on the fulfillment of personal intrinsic needs.

The majority of studies using SDT or its propositions, which are set in a sports environment, have focused on the roles of perceived competence and autonomy (Gray & Wilson, 2010). Many of those studies have framed competence and autonomy within the

context of athlete motivation for sustained involvement. A study that incorporates similar concepts but apply it to the context of coaching motivation would be beneficial.

Figure 3. Schematic representation of self-determination theory (adapted from Weissinger & Bandalos, 1995).

<b>Need for Intrinsic Rewards</b> (self determination and competence) and <b>Individual Differences</b> in desire of intrinsic rewards	<b>Awareness</b> of potential satisfaction for intrinsic needs	<b>Selection of Goal</b> to satisfy intrinsic needs	<b>Selection of Behavior</b> to achieve goal	<b>Engagement</b> in goals directed behavior	<b>Outcome</b> (satisfy or fail to satisfy intrinsic needs)
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The majority of studies using SDT or its propositions, which are set in a sports environment, have focused on the roles of perceived competence and autonomy (Gray & Wilson, 2010). Many of those studies have framed competence and autonomy within the context of athlete motivation for sustained involvement. A study that incorporates similar concepts but apply it to the context of coaching motivation would be beneficial.

SDT comprises four mini-theories: cognitive evaluation theory, organismic integration theory, causality orientation theory, and basic needs theory. Cognitive evaluation theory focuses on intrinsic motivation while organismic integration theory

focuses on extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Causality orientation theory looks to predict experience and behavior while basic needs theory looks at motivation and goals in relation to general health and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT has been applied in the world of sport and exercise most often through the premise of cognitive evaluation theory. Since an unpublished preliminary survey showed that the motivation to coach the sport of equestrian vaulting is based in intrinsic motivation, the cognitive evaluation theory could be used frame future research.

### Cognitive Evaluation Theory

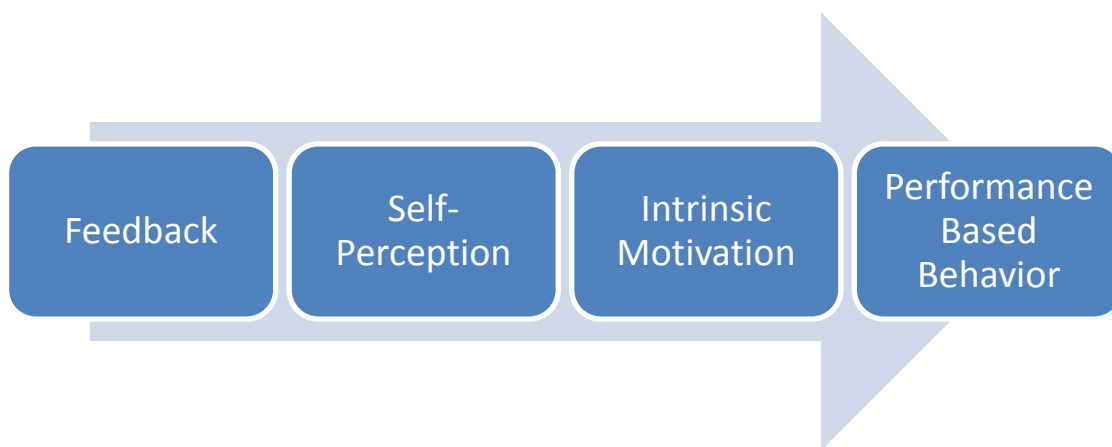
Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) was initially designed to demonstrate the effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2002). CET suggests that people can be identified as either the source that instigates their behavior or as having their behavior influenced or controlled by a source other than themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Those that view themselves as the cause of their behavior tend to actively work to create change in their own environment (Rummel & Feinberg, 1990). These individuals are intrinsically motivated and feel themselves to be the center control for their behavior. Those who do not exhibit this internal motivation, tend to feel they have little to no control for their behavior choices (Rummel & Feinberg, 1990) as their behavior is controlled by the perceived reward received for a particular action.

CET suggests that the need for competence and autonomy are integrally involved in intrinsic motivation. Performance related outcomes such as a reward, feedback, or a deadline, are likely to affect intrinsic motivation to the degree that they are experienced as encouraging versus hindering the satisfaction of one's needs for competence and

autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Competence involves an examination of feedback that provides information about effectiveness, ability and skill. Autonomy involves an awareness of internal need, and a strong desire to freely make choices based on those needs (Weissinger & Bandalos, 1995). Rewards and feedback are both characterized as sources of information that supports competence and autonomy.

CET illustrates a developmental continuum in the relationships among feedback, self-perception, intrinsic motivation, and performance related behaviors (see Figure 4.). First, feedback influences self-perceptions of competence. Second, self-perceptions of competence influence intrinsic motivation. Third, intrinsic motivations influence performance-based behaviors. CET predicts that self-perceptions influence performance because they influence intrinsic motivation (Jussim, Soffin, Brown, Ley, & Kohlhepp, 1992). That is, intrinsic motivation should direct one's self-perceptions on outcomes such as task choice, effort, and performance. These outcomes are all critical elements of developing effective volunteer coaches in sports.

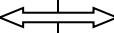
Figure 4. Relationship of Influences





CET has four main propositions (see Figure 5.) which help to explain and predict a person's level of intrinsic motivation. The propositions are autonomy, competence, feedback, and orientation. The four propositions can be used to either enhance or undermine intrinsic motivation.

Figure 5. Factors Effecting Intrinsic Motivation

	<b>Enhance Intrinsic Motivation</b>	 <b>Undermine Intrinsic Motivation</b>
<b>Proposition 1 Autonomy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels in control (autonomy)</li> <li>• Has choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings controlled by external factor</li> </ul>
<b>Proposition 2 Competence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High perceived competence</li> <li>• Challenge equals skill level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low perceived competence</li> <li>• Challenge exceeds or falls below skill level</li> </ul>
<b>Proposition 3 Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewards are informational</li> <li>• Feedback is informational</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewards are controlling or amotivating</li> <li>• Feedback is controlling or amotivating</li> </ul>
<b>Proposition 4 Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task involved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ego involved</li> </ul>

Proposition one states that intrinsically motivating activities are autonomous or self-determined (Frederick & Ryan, 1995). It relates to people's intrinsic need to be self-determined. The perceived cause of behavior is dictated by the degree to which one's actions are self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). When individuals participate in an activity in which they feel they have some control over what they do and how they do it, their intrinsic motivation will be stronger. Conversely, when individuals participate in an activity in which they feel controlled by external factors, intrinsic motivation is likely to decrease.

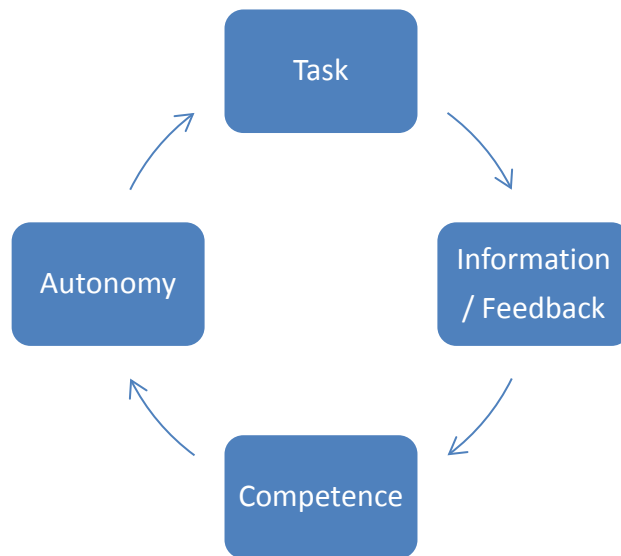
Proposition two states that feelings of competence and optimal challenge enhance intrinsic motivation. This relates to people's intrinsic need to feel competent and to master optimal challenges (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). In this context, competence refers to how an individual feels about themselves in relation to each aspect of their life; optimal challenge refers to situations where the challenge of an activity does not exceed the individual's abilities (Weiss & Bressan, 1985). People tend to seek out optimally challenging situations when they are motivated to be self-determined and competent.

Proposition three describes the significance of how one's interpretation of feedback, whether encouraging or deflating, impacts intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1994). This relates to the fact that people comprehend and internalize their behavior differently at different times (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). External factors that provide positive and constructive feedback with respect to one's perceived competence promote intrinsic motivation, whereas external factors that are controlling or amotivational (that convey a sense of incompetence or helplessness) undermine intrinsic motivation.

Proposition four suggests that individual's mental orientation, with respect to a particular activity, influences their intrinsic motivation. Individuals who are task involved tend to be more intrinsically motivated because they take part in an activity for enjoyment's sake. Those who are ego involved tend to exhibit less intrinsic motivation because they feel controlled by an external pressure to participate in order to appease their self-esteem. The desire to coach for the purpose of training athletes in a skill rather than for the primary purpose of having a winning athlete is an example of coaching for task rather than ego.

These four propositions are closely inter-related (see Figure 6.). Feelings of autonomy (proposition 1) and perceptions of competence (proposition 2) are largely based on the information received (proposition 3) from the task conducted (proposition 4). For the type of engagement that promotes optimal problem solving and performance, people need to be intrinsically motivated. When people understand how to achieve desired outcomes, feel competent at the tasks needed to achieve those outcomes, and are encouraged by relationships that support autonomy, the application of the cognitive evaluation theory has occurred. When these elements are combined, people will be likely to set their own goals, develop their own standards, monitor their own progress, and attain goals that benefit not only themselves, but also the organizations to which they belong (Deci & Flaste, 1995).

Figure 6. Cognitive Evaluation Theory: Relationship of Propositions



Previous studies grounded in CET have typically focused on manipulating those factors that undermine intrinsic motivation. There is an opportunity for studies to take a different approach by using a design that evaluates if the factors that enhance intrinsic motivation hold true for coaches of equestrian vaulting. CET could be used to confirm the intrinsic motivational aspects of coaching and to determine if the intensity of the enhancement factors varies among vaulting coaches.

There is support that the intrinsic factors of CET can increase coaching longevity and retention. Martens (1990) states that burnout is less likely to occur if there is continuing education about the sport and coaching strategies. Coaches need to feel a sense of achievement and success from coaching. Success does not need to be in the form of competitions won, but can be seen in the development of better human beings and experienced in bringing enjoyment to those who participate. Furthermore, coaches are

less likely to burnout when they see themselves as moving toward their own personal goals and growing as a person. For many individuals, sports provide experiences where intrinsic motivation takes place (Frederick-Recascino, 2002). This is a prime reason why CET is a major theory in the study of sports motivation.

CET has been extensively tested and supported in youth sport and physical activity settings. The relevant constructs and processes contained within this theory constitute an appropriate and appealing approach for studying the motivational processes of vaulting coaches. The framework highlights perceived competence and autonomy, which are considered to be significant predictors of intrinsic motivation. An examination of intrinsic motivation of the adult volunteer coach versus the youth participant is a shift from previous studies.

#### Motivation of Volunteer Sports Coaches

Decisions to engage in volunteerism tend to have emotion-based motivations. Satisfaction with both individual and organizational performance strongly influences the emotion-based decision to continue volunteering. Research on volunteers finds that the experiential benefits of commitment and satisfaction are emotion-based motivational factors for involvement (Green & Chalip, 2004). Silverberg (2004) showed that volunteer coaches who personally knew the people who were benefitting from their service were more likely to volunteer. This is another example of emotion-based motivation to volunteer. If volunteer coaches are reaching their intrinsic needs through their coaching experiences, they are going to have high levels of satisfaction with their coaching

experiences (Green & Chalip, 2004). These coaches may be more likely to continue as volunteers, which could lead to increased levels of achievement in their coaching.

With increasing societal pressure placed on the volunteer sport coach combined with the increasing turnover rate, the need to understand the motives behind sustained participation clearly exists (Palement, 2007). Despite this need, there has been very little research conducted into how and why individuals choose to become, or stay, volunteer coaches (Wilson, 2004). Volunteer coaches can be found anywhere from assisting at local sport programs, to top level sport events (Strigas & Jackson, 2003). Many participants incorrectly believe that sport management roles are filled by paid staff rather than unpaid volunteer staff. The American Vaulting Association (AVA) is a prime example of this phenomenon as the organization has only one part-time paid staff. All other management staff, event staff, organizational staff, etc. are volunteers.

People may decide to become a coach for various reasons: they previously played and loved the game, they watched and studied it, or they have assisted a coach in the past (Martens, 1990). These experiences can motivate someone to become a coach. Research into these motivational reasons however, is a relatively recent development in sport and recreation settings (Cuskelly, 1995). Much of the research related to volunteers in sport has focused on the management aspects of planning and implementing a volunteer program (Cuskelly, 1995). Such programs may point out the importance of motivating and retaining volunteers, but don't identify the processes by which volunteers become committed to the sports organization.

Cuskelly's (2004) research into sports showed that while athlete participation continues to increase, volunteer coaching numbers are declining. It has become an ongoing challenge for sport organizations to recruit, train and retain volunteers, especially well qualified and experienced coaches. Numerous researchers have shown that motivation plays an important role in volunteerism (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye & Darcy, 2006; Kim & Chelladurai, 2008; Maclean & Hamm, 2007). These researchers have shown that volunteers with low levels of motivation are more likely to have low morale, high turnover and low productivity. Volunteers with high levels of motivation tend to be productive and resilient to burnout. This reinforces the need for sports organizations to understand an individual's motivation to become and stay a volunteer coach. The sport of equestrian vaulting is not exempt from this need.

### Equestrian Vaulting

Equestrian Vaulting is the sport of dance and gymnastics on the back of a moving horse. There may be one to three vaulters on the horse at one time performing gymnastic exercises choreographed to music and synchronized to the rhythm of the horse's movement. The horse moves in a circle around a lunger who maintains control of the horse.

Vaulting has existed as long as men and horses have been partners, making it one of the oldest forms of equestrian sport (N. Stevens-Brown, personal communication, November 2011). Rieder's (1991) research on the history of vaulting revealed that ancient sources indicate that even in the Antiquity and the Age of Chivalry vaulting was a highly valued sport. Examples of this sport can be traced back to the Bronze Age through

cave drawings showing representations of artistic riding (Sagar, 1993). Many of these drawings include depictions of vaulting exercises that are still used today. “The earliest example of equestrian art was found in southern Scandinavia and dates from the Bronze Age” (Sagar, 1993, p.8). Another ancient example is a rock carving from Africa (unknown date) believed to be by the Minoans (Sagar, 1993). “This carving can be seen, reconstructed as a wall painting, in the Palace of Knossos on the island of Crete” (Sagar, 1993, p 8). Many of the early equestrian drawings reveal various vaulting techniques practiced before the invention of horseback riding equipment.

The clearest origins of the sport of vaulting go back to early Roman times when the annual Roman Games consisted of chariot and horse racing as well as acrobatic displays on cantering horses (Sagar, 1993). Vaulting was a permanent part of the educational program for young Romans of high social standing (Rieder, 1991), possibly because only a class with enough leisure time to dedicate to the sport could achieve the precision involved. “During the Middle Ages knights practiced jumping onto horses and performing elegant exercises on horseback while in armor” (Rieder, 1991, p.8). This may have been done to help prepare the knights for battle where getting on and off the horse quickly, while avoiding oncoming warriors, was a key military survival skill. “During the Renaissance vaulting was a riding drill in academies for knights and served as agility training for young nobles” (Rieder, 1991, p. 8). The present name of the sport comes from the French “La Voltige,” which it acquired during the Renaissance (AVA, n.d.).

Soldiers have used gymnastics on horseback as a training tool for refining equestrian skills from the Roman times up to the 1920’s, when, for a brief time, vaulting



was an Olympic Sport performed by military Calvary teams under the title of ‘Artistic Riding’ (Rieder, 1991, p. 9). When the horse lost its importance for the military, the interest in vaulting also decreased. For a long time it was regarded simply as children’s pastime, practiced while they were waiting to grow big enough for other riding disciplines (Weimers, 1994, p.1).

Modern vaulting, as it is practiced today with some changes and improvements, was “first developed in Germany toward the end of the 1940’s to offer children an inexpensive way of becoming involved in equestrian sports” (Rieder, 1991, p. 9). Vaulting is considered to be the most cost efficient of the equestrian sports because it allows for multiple people to utilize the same horse during the same riding session (N. Stevens-Brown, personal communication, November 2011). Vaulters typically mount (get on) the horse, perform a few exercises, then dismount (get off), allowing for the next vaulter to get on. This rotation continues throughout the entire session.

During the last few decades “this well-loved activity for children and youth has developed into an independent competition and performance sport” (Rieder, 1991, p. 9) for people of all ages with its own rules, competitions and championships. The role of vaulting is not limited to sport and competitions; it also includes leisure activities. Vaulting has a lot to offer participants. Through shared experiences, which go beyond those of normal everyday life, they learn integration in society, gain new experience and get to know more about riding, which increases their enthusiasm (Belton, 1987). During this same time period, vaulting has also grown in popularity as an adaptive sport, while still continuing to be used recreationally as a riding and training aid.

The benefits of vaulting to the individual athlete include coordination, balance, strength, creativity, trust, teamwork, responsibility, and self-confidence. The various vaulting exercises are all designed to be fun and challenging while encouraging harmony and partnership with the horse and rider (AVA, n.d.). Each vaulting movement can easily be adapted to fit the needs and abilities of any level of student. This allows the sport to have three different, yet overlapping, aspects – competitive, recreational, and adaptive. Although each of these three vaulting aspects are distinct in their training approach, there are numerous opportunities for cross over amongst them.

Elizabeth Searle first brought vaulting to the United States as a competitive sport in the late 1960's after being introduced to the sport during a visit to Germany (Sagar, 1993). "Ms. Searle formed the first American vaulting team in a small town near Santa Cruz in California" (Sagar, 1993, p. 15). Vaulting was formally organized in the United States in 1966, as the American Vaulting Association (AVA, n.d.). By 1968, the American Vaulting Association (AVA) was incorporated as a recognized not-for-profit organization to promote the sport nationally (Sagar, 1993). By 2001 the association had grown to over 100 clubs and over 1,000 members (C. Coburn, personal communication, November 2007). Throughout the following decade, the rate of growth did not significantly exceeded attrition rates.

Research has not been conducted to identify the specific reasons for the stagnated growth in the AVA's membership, but according to the current strategic plan the organization expects to increase participation through marketing and outreach initiatives (Benjamin, 2007). The AVA has outlined strategies related to building visibility through

local events and building membership by promoting various types of memberships – with a special focus on alumni (Benjamin, 2007).

Vaulting is one of only eight disciplines that have been accepted into the World Equestrian Games. The other disciplines include: dressage, driving, endurance, eventing, jumping, reining, and para-equestrian (USEF, n.d.). The United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) is the governing body that oversees all equestrian participants (equine and human) from the United States at the World Games.

The AVA and the USEF both espouse an immediate need to present a strong image of wide spread support for vaulting (USEF, 2006). American vaulters have consistently medaled at the World Equestrian Games since 1988, most recently capturing the Gold Medal in the team category during the 2010 Games. Although the quality of the American athletes can match other countries, the United States lags behind in overall participation in the sport (N. Stevens-Brown, personal communication, November 2011).

The United States Equestrian Federation espouses the many benefits of vaulting but has identified four major weaknesses that directly relate to the need for the AVA to increase membership and the overall number of vaulting participants (USEF, 2006). Weaknesses include the shortage of competitions, the non-diverse geography of vaulting clubs, the lack of depth and low number of vaulters, and a limited pipeline of top-level athletes.

In national not-for-profit sport programs like equestrian vaulting, volunteers are often the primary labor force and make key contributions in various positions, such as coaches or team managers (N. Stevens-Brown, personal communication, November

2011). Volunteers also assume organizational business positions as well, such as board and committee members. Sporting organizations that rely solely on volunteers are in a very tenuous position when it comes to motivating volunteers and building commitment to the organization (Pearce, 1993). Sport organizations that are successful at building commitment are those which provide service and training opportunities that relate to coaching, officiating, and socializing – all aspects of leisure sports volunteer activity (Cuskelly, 1995). This coincides with research done by Watts and Caldwell (2008) that showed structured activities help to strengthen intrinsic motivation to participate and the initiative to continue participation.

Without the development of new coaches, while still retaining current coaches, the potential for expansion is severely hindered. Research into the motivations of vaulting coaches may also provide helpful information for other equine sports, as well as for the sports of dance and gymnastics. Research is needed to lay the groundwork for examining the motivational relationships between coaching competitively, recreationally, and adaptively.

### Vaulting Coaches

Many demands are placed on the vaulting coach, who is often the lunger. The coach must be instructor, expert horseman, teacher, advisor and organizer, all in one. The coach's ability, expertise and teaching skill are decisive elements for vaulters to continue in the sport and grow together as a team. In addition to the ability to correctly lunge a horse, Weimers (1994, p. 11) states that the coach should also know the theory of teaching sports and have a sufficient knowledge of vaulting.

The coach is of paramount importance. The success and the enjoyment of a vaulting group depend upon the coach's ability, knowledge and skill (N. Stevens-Brown, personal communication, November 2011). A coach must possess a specialized knowledge of vaulting and be able to pass on this knowledge and make appropriate corrections to the movements. The coach should be comfortable working with children (the age of most vaulters), be able to motivate them, and be confident and experienced with horses (Belton, 1987).

Effective coaches inspire those they coach with a sense of self-reliance and deep-seated determination (N. Stevens-Brown, personal communication, November 2011). Coaches facilitate personal mastery by training and guiding others into increased competence, commitment, and confidence (Hudson, 1999). To be successful, the coach must be a competent and reliable learning resource. The interpersonal nature of coaching provides a bonus feature to the coach-athlete process that grows out of the quality of the relationship (Hudson, 1999). Equestrian sports provide an additional value-added experience through the relationship with the horse.

A few successful coaches are young people who have been active vaulters and as a result of their practical experience have especially good backgrounds. They may have become used to horses at an early age and are generally committed to and enthusiastic about vaulting. Unfortunately, vaulting experience may also be masked as expertise in coaching and coaches may rely on "accepted knowledge" of coaching learned from their own experience rather than knowledge based on formal educational processes (Feltz,

Hepler, Roman, & Paiement, 2009). “Thus to be effective, coaches must connect their athlete knowledge to knowledge for coaching” (Feltz, et. al, 2009, p.36).

There are also, however, excellent coaches who have never vaulted and who have obtained their knowledge through training seminars and frequent observation (N. Stevens-Brown, personal communication, November 2011). Interested coaches will always use opportunities to continue their education in clinics about lunging, coaching or other vaulting related areas (Rieder, 1991, p. 23). Malete and Feltz (2000) showed that a well-designed coaching education program could increase the level of coaching effectiveness, especially when one’s previous experience in the sport has been minimal.

Although many comprehensive coach-education programs are available, hands-on coaching experience is frequently cited as the most effective means of learning how to coach (Gilbert, Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). Unfortunately, the valuable lessons learned through experience are rarely shared with the sport of vaulting. In equestrian vaulting the limited passing of direct experience and knowledge is compounded by the vast geographical areas that are frequently found between coaches (N. Stevens-Brown, personal communication, November 2011). Research has not been conducted on examining the motivational psyche that influences someone to coach vaulting – in general terms or in relation to a specific aspect of vaulting.

### Summary

The unique aspects of the multi-discipline nature of equestrian vaulting and the limited number of volunteers linked to the grassroots through international levels make this sport clearly representative of coaching sustainability issues. As these challenges

continue to unfold, it becomes critical to understand and foster the commitment of volunteers. This includes not only volunteer coaches, but also other sport volunteer roles including event officials, board members, and other organizational positions. A better understanding of the nature of commitment and its consequences can inform sport organizations what they need to consider in fostering volunteers. This research in exploring the motivations to become a volunteer vaulting coach is the first step in addressing these challenges.

The literature on motivation provides support for utilizing CET as a framework for exploring the motivation of coaches although most prior research has focused on the motivation of athletes and has used CET to indicate factors that decrease motivation. Since motivation and the propositions of CET can all be viewed on a continuum of influences, this research will explore those factors that increase motivation. This positive factor approach will allow sport organizations to apply the results to their management practices in a proactive manner.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

Searching for patterns, for consistencies and for connections is the foundational reasoning of all research efforts (Stake, 1995). Gratton and Jones (2004) define research as “a systematic process of discovering and the advancement of human knowledge” (p. 4). Research is a strategically planned and organized investigation designed to answer a question or series of questions. Selecting the best method of data collection is the research methodology aspect of the investigation and phenomenology was selected for this study.

#### Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach to qualitative research has its roots in such philosophical traditions as existentialism and studying of the meaning of language and other symbolic social relationships and behaviors (McNabb, 2002). Creswell (1998) describes phenomenology as an approach designed to understand and describe the essence of experiences related to a specific situation, activity or phenomena. The primary objective of the phenomenological researcher is for the research subject to explore and explain their behavior. Interviews can collect data concerned with *why* concepts that can be difficult to measure or observe. In other words, interviews allow for the construction of understanding the essence of an experience, making interviews an effective technique in phenomenological research and an appropriate approach for this study.



The one to one interview is the most common method by which qualitative data is collected in social science research, especially sport research (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Gratton and Jones (2004) have stated that engaging in interviews can be one of the best approaches for gaining a personal understanding from a small or unique sample group. Interviews can be especially effective when the researcher is seeking explanation. Interviews can be generally grouped into four approaches: the structured interview, the semi-structured interview, the unstructured interview and the focus group, or group interview (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

This study used the semi-structured interview as a format for a conversation to explore the motivational factors for volunteer coaching within the sport of equestrian vaulting. Interviews, framed in phenomenology were selected as an effective means for exploring coaching motivations as they allow for exploration into the reasons for coaching and the personal meaning that the coaching experience provides.

### Research Design

The purpose of this research was to identify the primary motivations for people to become and continue as equestrian vaulting coaches. Motivation has not been studied within the sport of vaulting. Using a nomothetic context for research, this study focused on gaining a better understanding of equestrian vaulting coaches by identifying the factors that generally motivate their participation in the sport. This pragmatic paradigm allows for practical application of the results. As an insider of this sport, the researcher and the participants co-constructed their understanding of coaching motivation.

A qualitative approach was employed, using a series of interviews to explain the development of the motivational factors that lead to initial and sustained involvement as a volunteer coach. Constructivist ontology was used in that multiple realities or truths of coaching motivation were constructed. The individual motivational experiences of selected coaches within the sport of equestrian vaulting are explored and explained.

The interviews revealed the personal stories (emic data) of vaulting coaches in relation to their motivation to coach and their perspective on how that motivation developed. Interpretation was a major part of this research. By examining the same situation – coaching motivation – using different viewpoints, and comparing it against the preliminary survey data, triangulation was obtained (Gratton & Jones, 2004). These results are expected to be useful to the sport of equestrian vaulting and transferrable to the broader field of sports coaching in general.

#### Preliminary Study

An exploratory survey was distributed electronically to the 267 members who self-identified as a coach when registering with the American Vaulting Association. One hundred fifty-nine coaches returned the survey for a response rate of 60%. This greatly exceeds the average return rate of 37% for electronic surveys (Shehan, 2001). Although there are believed to be hundreds of other horseback-riding instructors coaching vaulting for recreational and/or therapeutic purposes, there is not an established database that captures their involvement in the sport. The unknown aspects of the population of equestrian vaulting coaches led to the decision of using this convenience sample. The survey's demographic and foundational questions were used to establish the voluntary

and intrinsic motivation nature of coaching. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to generate both demographic and motivational profiles of vaulting coaches. Additional open-ended questions were also included to lay the groundwork for future research specific to the sport of equestrian vaulting.

Demographic questions revealed that 31% of coaches currently engage in vaulting themselves, while 54% of coaches have past experiences as a vaulter, and 40% of coaches have a child who vaults. Ten percent of vaulting coaches are currently coaching another sport, while 37% of coaches have previous experience coaching another sport and 58% have previous experience as instructors in another equine discipline. The respondents' vaulting coaching experience is divided fairly equally, with 42% coaching for six years or less and 58% who have been coaching for over six years. With 96% of coaches reporting that coaching equestrian vaulting does not serve as their primary source of income, the results indicate that coaching vaulting is a leisure pursuit to which coaches provide a volunteer service. Despite the fact that 40% of all the responding vaulting coaches are also currently instructors in another riding discipline, only 25% of coaches stated that they derive their primary income from the overall equestrian industry.

The foundational questions of the survey related to the four propositions of motivation as defined by CET. As these questions evaluated where on the intrinsic – extrinsic motivation continuum each coach ranged, the responses were a continuum of options (five-point likert scale) ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Since the questions were written in such a way that strongly agree relates to an affinity towards intrinsic motivation, the results showed that equestrian vaulting coaches are highly

motivated by intrinsic factors and are motivated by the supportive factors of CET. The results of this preliminary survey, along with previous literature related to volunteer coaching motivation, provided a framework from which to build the interview methods.

### Interview Strategies

The explanatory aspect of interviews defined how the coach transitioned into coaching and how the cognitive evaluation theory and intrinsic motivation played a role in that process. The coaches selected for the interviews were chosen based on the following criteria: the coach is easy for the researcher to access, the coach is hospitable to the inquiry, the coaches' willingness to comment on drafts materials, gender, and the situational uniqueness of the coach. Situational uniqueness includes geography and years of coaching experience. Fifteen coaches were interviewed; saturation was reached after the ninth.

Demographic information on these coaches was collected on a standardized form (see appendix B). Each interview participant signed a consent form (see appendix C) to ensure informed consent. Consent forms were signed prior to the start of the interview. The data collection was conducted in a free, narrative style, using a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix D). Qualitative research allows for a detailed description of the experience and for discovery of relationships and connections, including connections between events and consequences. These benefits can be attributed in part to the reflexive nature of interviewing, as it allows the researcher to request further details and clarifications in order to obtain rich descriptions and interpretations from others (Stake, 1995).

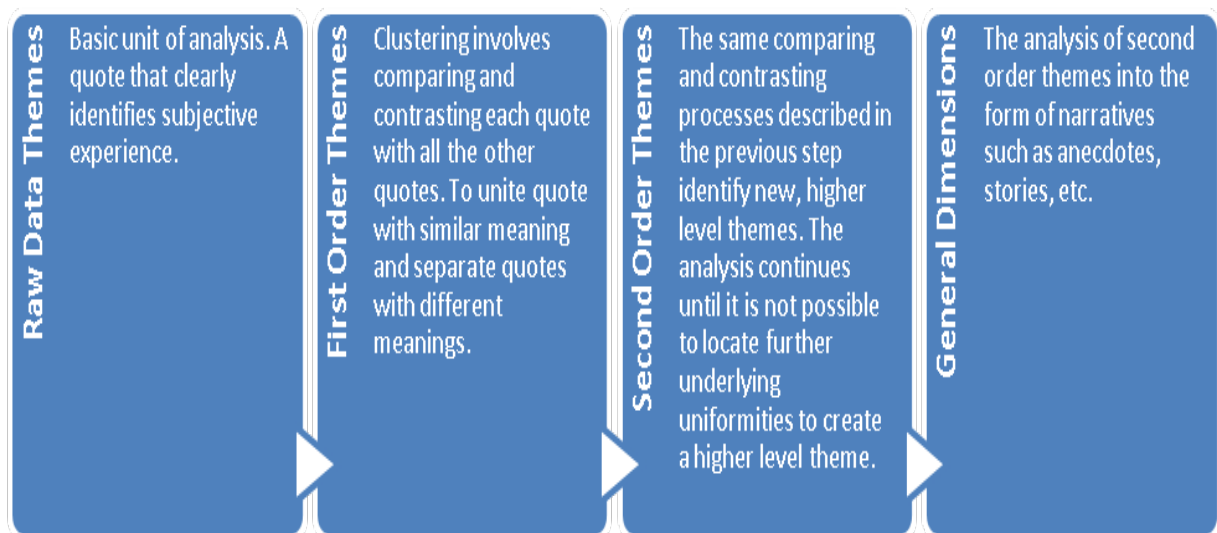
The semi-structured interview process was selected since it is a flexible way of gathering data that is detailed and personal. The open-ended questions allowed for exploration of the complex issue of motivation while allowing the interviewer to monitor the relevance of the content and to ask for clarification of answers. Semi-structured questions also allowed the participant to feel more empowered with the process. Expectations as to roles and an overview of the process were set at the start of the interviews, followed by descriptive questions then moving into the more challenging critical analysis type questions.

Questions expanded on the results of the preliminary survey that confirmed the voluntary and intrinsic nature of vaulting coaches. Each of the four propositions of CET, autonomy, competence, feedback, and orientation, were represented in the question design. The interviews reflected the motivational journey that led participants to become and to continue being an equestrian vaulting coach. Having the interviewees critically comment on the completed interview transcripts provided a check of the validity of these reports.

Interviews were conducted by telephone and were audio-recorded and professionally transcribed in full by a commercial vendor. The transcription and field notes were coded to identify a list of key words, themes, and other identifiable trends. Once the data reduction was complete, a research specialist was asked to review the coding as a way to check the reliability of the coding. The coded identification list was clustered with like words from which preliminary themes were outlined (see Figure 7). These themes were placed into various graphical formats to allow for a clearer picture of

relationships amongst themes. The preliminary themes were expanded upon to clarify the final themes and interpretations of the interviews. Although every sport has its own set of terminology, the researcher's insider role and twenty year experience in the sport of equestrian vaulting is believed to have provided accuracy in language meaning.

Figure 7. A framework for the thematic analysis of qualitative data (adapted from Gratton & Jones, 2004, p. 223).



### Rationalization and Researcher Role

This research represents a construction of knowledge in order to understand what has led to the motivation to become and continue as a volunteer coach. This approach required a personal relationship between the researcher and the coaches being studied. These are characteristics of qualitative research where the role of the researcher is that of an interpreter. The interpreter desires to identify and explain meaning of a specific behavior. This role involves investigating a situation in order to identify established and

new information, and to draw connections between those data sets (Stake, 1995). This qualitative approach of phenomenology answers the *why that is* regarding the motivation of equestrian vaulting volunteer coaches.

### Summary

The phenomenological approach and use of semi-structured interviews allowed for a rich collection of data related to the motivation of the selected coaches. Interview questions were based on a preliminary survey and framed by CET. Analysis of the data was based on strategies outlined by Gratton and Jones (2004) and provided the procedures for identifying themes and verifying the coding.

## CHAPTER 4

### JOURNAL ARTICLE

For submission to the Journal of Applied Sport Psychology



RUNNING HEAD

Motivation of Vaulting Coaches

ARTICLE TITLE

Understanding the Motivation of Coaches in the Sport of Equestrian Vaulting

BYLINE

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AUTHOR NOTE

This submission is for a feature article and based upon research for a dissertation.  
Ms. McCune is a PhD Candidate. Dr. Arthur-Banning and Dr. Dorothy Schmalz are  
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Education, and Human Development.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to identify the primary motivations for people to become and continue as equestrian vaulting coaches. Using a nomothetic context for research, this study focused on gaining a better understanding of equestrian vaulting coaches by identifying factors that generally motivate their participation in the sport. The first research question related to what motivates someone to become a vaulting coach while the second question related to what motivates these coaches to continue in the coaching role.

Fifteen female coaches were selected for interviews from the American Vaulting Association membership. Interview questions were based on a preliminary survey and were designed to expand upon general motivational data. The resulting information showed strong support for the voluntary nature that drives vaulting coaches to initiate and sustain their action. Motivations for becoming a coach centered on intrinsic factor while motivations to continue as a coach centered on vaulter success. Aside from contributing to the growing research literature related to the motivation of coaches and to the sport of equestrian vaulting overall, many avenues are provided for this research to be applied to the management of volunteer coaches by sports organizations.

## **Keywords**

Intrinsic motivation, volunteer coaching, equestrian vaulting, phenomenology, sports

## **Introduction**

Although current sports research is predominately focused on how coaches motivate their athletes, the importance of understanding the motivations and experiences of sport coaches themselves is gaining researcher interest and momentum (Paiement, 2007). Trends indicate that while athlete participation continues to increase, coaching numbers are declining (Cuskelly, 2004). The significant attrition rate of coaches, documented in a variety of sport settings, is just one example of the trends being identified by researchers (Deacon, 2001). Despite the recent momentum for understanding coaches, very little research has examined the motivational factors that drive someone to become a coach (Kim, Zhang, & Connaughton, 2010). By identifying the factors that inspire someone to become a sports coach, these factors could be used in the recruitment and retainment strategies of sport organizations and therefore potentially reverse some of the current attrition rates many sports are experiencing (Wilson, 2004).

Coaches are essential to the success of organizations to be able to provide sport services (Green & Chalip, 2004). The development of positive, effective coaches can be a challenge for any sport, but it is particularly difficult for a unique sport that is not part of the mainstream culture, such as equestrian vaulting<sup>1</sup>. Published research that identifies the specific reasons as to why coaches get involved with equestrian vaulting or what sustains their involvement in this sport has not been found. Therefore, examining the motivations of equestrian vaulting coaches has the potential to contribute to this research deficit area.

The purpose of this study was to identify the primary motivations for people to become and continue as equestrian vaulting coaches. Coaching motivation has not been studied within the sport of vaulting, and investigating the similarities and differences in coaching entry experiences has had little examination in any sport. The research for this study was informed by a preliminary quantitative survey and is based on a qualitative series of interviews. The qualitative approach of phenomenology answers the *why that is* regarding the motivation of these coaches. The first research question related to what motivates someone to become a vaulting coach while the second question related to what motivates these coaches to continue in the coaching role.

This research also provides helpful information for other equine sports, as well as for vaulting related sports such as dance and gymnastics. Furthermore, this research lays the groundwork for examining the motivational relationships between coaching competitively, recreationally, and for therapeutic purposes.

## **Literature Review**

### *Motivational Theory*

Theories of motivation are closely related to human behavior and frequently describe the internal force or energy that leads to involvement and action (Iso-Ahola, 1985). Motivation is the internal force or source of energy behind the decision that leads to the involvement in sport and the action of coaching. Motivation, as it relates to decisions, involves people seeing a connection between their actions and their desired results (Deci & Ryan, 1985b). If people perceive the connection to be negative, they are

less likely to be motivated. If people perceive the connection to be positive, they are more likely to be motivated and therefore more apt to engage in a specific behavior.

Motivation is typically delineated into two primary categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Deci and Ryan (1985a), when one participates in an activity simply for the pleasure of being engaged, they are described as being intrinsically motivated. When one participates for the purpose of achieving a defined ego or material goal, they are described as being extrinsically motivated. Results from an activity may be intrinsic satisfactions or extrinsic rewards, but voluntary actions are generally believed to be motivated by intrinsic satisfactions (Deci & Flaste, 1995). Martens (1990) states that people who are intrinsically motivated evaluate success by their ability to master the task.

Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) focuses on autonomy, competence, informational feedback, and task orientation, all of which are aspects of intrinsic motivation. This theory states that these aspects of intrinsic motivation are used to determine if the connection between action and results will be positive or negative (Deci & Ryan, 1991). CET was used to frame a preliminary investigative survey and showed that the motivation to coach the sport of equestrian vaulting is based in intrinsic motivation.

CET has four main propositions – autonomy, competence, informational feedback, and task orientation – which combine to provide understanding and help predict the intrinsic motivation of individuals. The first proposition relates to the autonomous nature of intrinsic motivation (Frederick & Ryan, 1995). Behaviors and actions that are freely chosen and un-coerced are autonomous. When one has the

autonomy to determine their behaviors and actions, they are in control of both their choices and their participation (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). Personal control enhances intrinsic motivation. If participation is controlled by others and autonomy is lacking, intrinsic motivation decreases. Goudas, Biddle, Fox, and Underwood (1995) tested the hypothesis that personal control increases intrinsic motivation within a school's physical education class. Students who were provided with opportunities to choose their activities showed higher levels of intrinsic motivation than those students whose autonomy was restricted. This study explores that same principle but in relation to coaches rather than students.

The second proposition relates to the effect of one's belief in their competence on their intrinsic motivation. Many human behaviorists believe that people have a natural inclination to feel competent and to believe in their ability to overcome challenges (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). How one feels about their level of knowledge, skills, and abilities in a specific subject matter is a reflection of their feelings of competence (Weiss & Bressan, 1985). When people are autonomous in their choices and feel competent in their actions, they are more likely to engage in challenging situations. For example, research has demonstrated that when one engages in challenging situations where they feel autonomous and competent, they exhibit higher levels of enjoyment and participation (Mandigo & Holt, 2000). Therefore, the successful participation in challenging activities likely results in feelings of autonomy and competence. These results lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation. This shows the cyclical relationship between perceived competence and intrinsic motivation.

The third proposition relates to the impact informational feedback, in the context of being a reward outcome, has on intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1994). It describes the relationship between behavior and the resulting outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). When participation outcomes provide positive, informational, and constructive feedback, it increases one's competence and therefore promotes their level of intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985a) asserted that external events such as rewards and communication could serve the functional aspect of information.

The informational aspect conveys meaningful feedback in the context of self-determination. There are two important elements in this definition; first, that there be meaningful information; and second, that there be self-determination in performance outcomes. For any feedback to serve an informational function, it must be received within the context of a self-determined performance. Without this context, feedback does not really reflect one's competence (Ryan, Mims, & Koestner, 1983). It is internalization and personal importance of the feedback that influences autonomy and competence, and that in turn influences intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). In other words, the amount of value one puts on the feedback directly relates to how one will use the feedback

The fourth proposition relates to one's purpose in participating in a particular activity. Task oriented individuals have higher levels of intrinsic motivation because they are focused on the activity itself instead of any potential prestige or ego benefits from the activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). Task involvement can be likened to intrinsic motivation and an internal purpose for action. A person becomes involved with the activity because

one is focused on the interesting aspects of the activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). By focusing on the enjoyment received from the experience of participation, even in competitive events, intrinsic motivation is sustained. Those who are task oriented are interested in the process of the activity, regardless of the results.

These four propositions are closely inter-related. Feelings of autonomy (proposition one) and perceptions of competence (proposition two) are largely based on the information received (proposition three) from the task conducted (proposition four). When people understand how to achieve desired outcomes, feel competent at the tasks, and are facilitated by interpersonal contexts that support autonomy, the application of CET has occurred (Deci & Flaste, 1995). In relation to coaching, examples of intrinsic motivation and CET might include coaching in an effort to increase one's own knowledge of the sport and its dynamics, coaching to increase one's professional success and the pride of having one's athletes succeed, or coaching for the pure pleasure and excitement that is derived from the action of coaching itself. In sport and exercise, as in other contexts, the importance of creating an environment that allows intrinsic motivation to flourish cannot be underestimated (Frederick-Recascino, 2002). Not only does the individual's participation grow in a positive manner, but the sport organization also benefits from continued involvement by a participant.

There is support that sport organizations can increase coaching longevity and retention by applying the intrinsic motivation principles of CET. According to Martens (1990), dropout is less likely to occur if there is continuing education about the sport and coaching. Coaches need to feel a sense of achievement and success from coaching.



Success does not need to be in the form of competitions won, but can be seen in the development of better human beings and experienced in bringing enjoyment to those who participate. Learning and self-improvement then, are viewed as key elements of success (Duda, Chi, Newton, Walling, & Catley, 1995). Sport, for many individuals, provides situations where competence can be recognized and developed. This creates environments in which intrinsic motivation is frequently present (Frederick-Recascino, 2002) and thus a prime reason why CET is a major theory in the study of motivation.

### *Coaching Motivation*

The motivation and philosophy of coaches is a key factor in the success of a sport program. It is important that sport coaches have examined what they value and can demonstrate these values through everyday actions and decisions. Having a philosophy will remove uncertainty about formulating training rules, discipline, code of conduct, short and long-term objectives, and many other facets of coaching. Coaches should approach the development of their philosophy with the same commitment they develop their technical knowledge of the sport (Martens, 1990). The development of a coaching philosophy may be reflective of the motivational factors behind the decision to coach.

One study involving volunteer baseball and softball coaches reported the assumption that anyone can coach, and that coaching recruitment frequently focuses on parental involvement in the sport or the pressure that if one does not coach, the sports teams may not be able to continue (McCallister, Blinde, & Kolenbrander, 2000). In equestrian vaulting, the perceived criteria for wanting to get involved may have similarities, but the high level of knowledge and skills (e.g. equine, gymnastic, dance,

etc.) needed to coach vaulting prohibit the perception that anyone can do it safely and effectively. Similarly, experiences as an athlete can motivate people to get involved as coaches and mentors, however, athletic experiences may not provide the necessary teaching and management skills needed for taking on coaching responsibilities (Clark, 2001). It is this context of coaching preparation and identifying a personal coaching philosophy that highlights the importance of understanding one's motivation to coach (McCallister, Blinde & Kolenbrander 2000).

#### *Foundational Research*

As a precursor to this research, a preliminary survey was utilized to build a framework from which to develop the research questions. The exploratory survey was distributed electronically to the 267 members who self-identified as a coach when registering with the American Vaulting Association. One hundred fifty-nine coaches returned the survey for a response rate of 60%. This greatly exceeds the average return rate of 37% for electronic surveys (Shehan, 2001). The survey's demographic (see Figure 1) and motivational (see Figure 2) questions were used to establish the general motivation nature of coaching. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to generate both demographic and motivational profiles of vaulting coaches. Additional open-ended questions were also included to lay the groundwork for future research specific to the sport of equestrian vaulting.

*[Insert figure 1 here.]*

Demographic questions revealed that 31% of coaches engaged in vaulting themselves, while 54% of coaches had past experiences as a vaulter, and 40% of coaches

have a child who vaults. Ten percent of vaulting coaches are currently coaching another sport, while 37% of coaches had previous experience coaching another sport and 58% had previous experience as instructors in another equine discipline. The respondents vaulting coaching experience is divided fairly equally, with 42% coaching for six years or less and 58% who had been coaching for over six years. The results indicate that coaching vaulting was a leisure pursuit to which coaches provide a volunteer service, with 96% of coaches reporting that coaching equestrian vaulting did not serve as their primary source of income. Despite the fact that 40% of all the responding vaulting coaches were also currently instructors in another riding discipline, only 25% of coaches stated that they derived their primary income from the overall equestrian industry.

*[Insert figure 2 here.]*

The motivational questions of the survey related to the four propositions of motivation as defined by CET. As these questions evaluated where on the intrinsic – extrinsic motivation continuum each coach ranged, the responses were a continuum of options (five-point Likert scale) ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Since the questions were written in such a way that strongly agree relates to an affinity towards intrinsic motivation, the results showed that equestrian vaulting coaches are highly motivated by intrinsic factors and are motivated by the supportive factors of CET.

### *Purpose of Study*

The purpose of this research was to identify the primary motivations for people to become and continue as equestrian vaulting coaches. Using a nomothetic context for research, this study focused on gaining a better understanding of equestrian vaulting

coaches by identifying factors that generally motivate their participation in the sport. The first research question related to what motivates someone to become a vaulting coach while the second question related to what motivates these coaches to continue in the coaching role. The results of the preliminary survey, along with previous literature related to coaching motivation, provided the framework from which the interview questions were built.

## **Method**

In order to gain a better understanding as to what motivates someone to become and continue as a vaulting coach, phenomenology was selected for this research. Creswell (1998) describes phenomenology as an approach designed to understand and describe the essence of experiences related to a specific situation, activity or phenomena. The primary objective of the phenomenological researcher is for the research subject to explore and explain their behavior. Interviews can generate data concerned with the *why* concepts that can be difficult to measure or observe. In other words, interviews allow for the construction of understanding the essence of an experience, making interviews an effective technique in phenomenological research and an appropriate approach for this study.

### *Participants*

The explanatory aspect of the interviews showed how equestrian vaulting volunteer coaches have transitioned into coaching and how intrinsic motivation played a role in the process. The fifteen female coaches selected for the interviews were chosen based on the situational uniqueness of the coach. Elements of situational uniqueness

included gender (only females were interviewed), geographic location, level of coaching experience and variety in coaching purpose (competitive, recreational, therapeutic or mixed purposes). No male coaches were selected due to the limited number of male coaches available and challenges in meeting the situational criteria.

The coaches selected for interviews represented all geographical regions of the United States (as defined by the American Vaulting Association) and all three purposes of coaching – competitive, recreational and therapeutic. Coaching experience ranged from less than three years to over thirty years. One-third of the coaches had personal experience as a vaulter before entering into coaching. Eleven of the participants had horses on their property and implemented their vaulting program from their own facilities. The other four coaches travelled anywhere from three minutes to thirty minutes to get to the location where they coached.

### *Procedures*

The data collection was conducted in a free, narrative style, using a semi-structured interview guide. Expectations regarding researcher/participant roles and an overview of the process were discussed at the start of the interviews, followed by descriptive questions which then moved into the more challenging critical analysis type questions. Descriptive questions related to coaching experience, type of coaching, age of vaulting participants, and other coaching situation factors. Analysis questions related to how participants become a coach, what training they had to become a coach, the rewards and challenges of coaching, and other factors used to determine motivation. Questions were based on the preliminary survey and were developed to provide rich data and fill in

data gaps from the survey data. Although every sport has its own set of terminology, the researcher's insider role and twenty years of experience in the sport of equestrian vaulting provided accuracy in language and meaning.

Interviews were conducted by telephone and were audio-recorded and transcribed by a professional service. Transcriptions were made available to participants for verification and accuracy. The transcription and any field notes were coded by the researcher to identify a list of key words, themes, and other identifiable trends. The coded identification list was clustered with like words from which preliminary themes were outlined (see Figure 3). These themes were placed into various graphical formats to allow for a clearer picture of relationships amongst themes. The preliminary themes were expanded upon to clarify the final themes and interpretations of the interviews. This process follows qualitative analysis procedures as outlined by Gratton and Jones (2004).

*[Insert figure 3 here.]*

## **Results**

The data collected and analyzed from the interviews showed strong support for the voluntary nature that drives vaulting coaches to initiate and sustain their action. Motivations for becoming a coach centered on intrinsic factors while motivations for continuing as a coach centered on vaulter success (see Figure 4). Intrinsic factors included volunteerism and leisure activity while vaulter success included the education and competence of the coach.

*[Insert figure 4 here.]*

### *Becoming a Coach*

Interviews revealed that motivation and reasoning for entry into coaching the sport of vaulting was delineated into three primary sources: filling a coaching void in an established vaulting program, developing a vaulting program in order to continue one's past involvement in the sport, or developing a vaulting program after casual exposure to the sport. Casual exposures included watching a vaulting demonstration or competition, or seeing an article, photograph or a video about vaulting. Participants that had knowledge of vaulting before becoming a coach cited their initial exposure to the sport to be through another equine related activity. These activities included demonstrations, camps and collegiate intramural experiences. The desire to become a coach was for either 1) the love of the sport or 2) to be able to provide the sport to children – regardless of whether or not the children were their own. Frieda and Gail were two of several coaches who expressed a love at first sight emotion upon being introduced to the sport.

Frieda: Even though I originally wanted to do it to better my riding skills, I just fell in love with it because I was immediately able to do things on the horse that I didn't think I would be able to do. You know just to be able to have some sense of the discipline that it takes to do gymnastics, but to do it on the horse was just really something. So I just fell in love with it. I saw how absolutely amazing it was and the athleticism involved. And from there on I was very interested and just tried to learn everything I could.

Gail: I was at a conference and saw a workshop called vaulting and so I thought, what is vaulting; I've never heard of it and so I decided to go to that session.

When I got there and got to try I loved it. So I went home thinking that I was going to open a club, I liked it that much.

Included in their statements about reasons for becoming a coach, the participants clearly expressed their personal choice, or autonomy, and their view of coaching as a leisure-time activity. These results, and the passion with which they were conveyed, led to the theme of intrinsic motivation. Key elements with this theme are the notion of autonomy and leisure activity.

Coaches were asked to identify their leisure time activities. About half of the coaches included coaching in their response. The remaining coaches were specifically asked if they would consider coaching as one of their leisure pursuits. The high percentage of affirmative responses (93%) to this question lends support to the autonomous nature of coaching. Carol, Donna, and Elizabeth provided examples of this sentiment.

Carol: My own recreation? It seems that all I ever do is vaulting. It is my favorite activity.

Donna: Coaching, vaulting, dressage and quadrille. All the horsey stuff is fun. I enjoy it which is why I do it.

Elizabeth: I do consider vaulting one of my leisure activities, because honestly, if I were a millionaire I would still do it. Because I love it.

The majority of these coaches stated that they were happy when they were able to make enough money to cover their expenses, such as transporting the horses to practices and events or to feed the vaulting horses. This led to the identification of volunteerism as



another element of intrinsic motivation. All of the coaches referenced the numerous hours of uncompensated preparation that are associated with coaching vaulting. These hours include caring for and training the horses, planning practices, completing organizational and competition paperwork, travel, and extending their own education in the sport. Ann<sup>2</sup>, who has only been a coach for four years, and Beth, who has coached for almost twenty years, both explained that all the preparation work needed to coach takes significantly more time than the coaching itself.

Ann: A volunteer? Yes, I mean although I am lucky, I do get paid for coaching, All the time that I put into teaching the horse how to lunge and all the conditioning, and just getting them [the horses] used to the vaulters [athletes] on them, all that extra work that I need to put in to get them ready to be part of the program is volunteer work.

Beth: Yes, of course I am a volunteer. I don't think my husband and I have gone on a vacation in several years. All of our vacation time and money goes into traveling to competitions and [training] clinics. I have to have a livelihood to pay for vaulting.

Overall, the primary motivation identified for becoming a vaulting coach centered on intrinsic motivation. Key factors within intrinsic motivation were identified as autonomy, leisure activity, and volunteerism. These factors all reinforce intrinsic motivation.

*Continuing as a Coach*

Coaches described the rewards and challenges of coaching as very vaulter-centric. One of the rewards cited by every participant dealt with the success of the vaulter. These successes included skill attainment, increased understanding of the sport, improved social relationships with their teammates, and a greater sense of self-confidence. Vaulter success was determined, based on these responses, to be the primary motivation for continuing as a coach. Beginning as a vaulter then becoming a coach in the 1980's, Jane has experienced many successes and challenges. However, it is the combination of several youth successfully working in harmony with a horse that keeps her motivated. Kim and Laura also expressed similar vaulter success experiences as the biggest personal reward they received from coaching. For Nancy the focus on coaching revolves around the artistry and creative nature of vaulting performances while Orly's commitment to the task of coaching is expressed in her determination to continue coaching.

Jane: Teamwork. We don't vault as individual vaulters, we vault as a club, as a team, and everybody has to support everybody else. And one of our most important teammates is the horse. So consideration for the horse, consideration for other vaulters, and positive attitudes.

Kim: I think the fact that the improvement, the excitement that the kids do that you know as they learn you know seeing a child who's just started vaulting and 2 or 3 years later what they could do, the confidence they show, the beauty of vaulting that they portray that they're confident in themselves.

Laura: And the cool thing, this never gets old, is that they transfer their success immediately to the horse; it's the connection between them and the horse. I know

it sounds very cliché but it really is because they don't even know sometimes that they are doing it. They immediately thank the horse and pat the horse or whatever, thinking that it was the horse but it's that connection that without each other they don't do it well.

Nancy: I love the beauty of it, even if we didn't compete we would still do it. Just the beauty of it and seeing the success and accomplishments of the kids.

Orly: I think I will always be coaching. I don't see any reason that I wouldn't; even if it came down to physical incapability, I could probably still find a way to do it."

Another reward mentioned by three participants was that of the horse's successes in accepting the sport and excelling in their role.

Gail: I think for me personally, it is has a lot to do with working with the horse.

Teaching the horse this very also challenging sport for the horse and of course the whole group feeling that it's a group sport and the practices are with all these girls, music is playing it's a lot of fun and they all share the horse and they all love their horse and in a way it's a little bit the opposite to me from my experience than what happens in the normal horseback riding.

The primary challenge participants identified was the time constraints vaulters undertook in pursuing vaulting. Participants identified the need to keep practices and activities fresh and exciting. By doing this, participants felt the vaulters enjoyed the sport more and therefore felt less stressed in choosing vaulting over other activities.

A key factor identified related to vaulter success was that of education. Coaches' method of education was more dependent upon whether or not the participant had prior knowledge of the sport rather than the proximity of another vaulting program. Those with vaulting experience relied primarily upon observation of other coaches, which was the most strongly desired method of learning across all the participants. Those participants without prior vaulting experience relied most heavily on vaulting books for their education.

The participants who were new to the sport struggled in finding information about coaching vaulting and information about other vaulting programs that might be in their geographic area. Personal initiative was needed to make connections with other coaches, but once those connections were made, participants found other coaches to be supportive and helpful. Hilda, who at the time of the interview had been coaching for over a decade, started her program when the next closest program to her was a few states away. This obstacle did not deter her enthusiasm for the sport. Ingrid, a thirty plus year coach and former vaulter, came from the opposite situation and was able to rely on many neighboring coaches.

Hilda: Oh absolutely I consider myself a coach. I have never encountered anything else in my life that has shaped it so profoundly and on so many different levels. Of course I always try to go to the annual convention and pick up whatever I can from there. I appreciate being able to go and learning different techniques, learning how to handle certain situations, and learning how to handle the kids, especially when they feel they can't do something.

Ingrid: I was just beginning to coach when I met Nancy. It was clear my team didn't know what they were doing at the competition but she could see that there was potential in me and she really encouraged me. And then I got to do some coaching with Susie and she was a big help. And I literally started going to every single educational opportunity available and coaching alongside a variety of experienced people.

The education of the coach was closely linked to the perceived competence felt by the coach and their ability to create situations where the vaulter could succeed. These examples highlight a strong desire to continually learn more and work to improve both technical and management skills. This signifies a desire for increased competence.

Participants had slight variations in their description of recreational vaulting. Most defined it as non-competitive while others discussed the commitment level of the vaulter with practices seen as optional and having social fun while learning as the primary purpose. A few coaches included the desire to improve horseback riding skills in the definition of recreational vaulting. This aspect aligned with coaches who had adult recreational vaulters.

Participants also differentiated between adaptive, therapeutic and interactive vaulting. Adaptive vaulting was defined as using vaulting to address various disabilities while not being under the supervision of a therapist. The primary objective in adaptive vaulting was described as the attainment of vaulting skills. In therapeutic vaulting the primary objective was defined as addressing physical or emotional disabilities through the use of vaulting. Interactive vaulting was reported as focusing on what happens in the

lesson between participants, including the horse, rather than on vaulting skills. The key element of interactive vaulting is the communication between participants. When the above defined types of coaching were matched with reasons for engagement in coaching, no substantial differences or themes were discovered. Therefore it stands to reason that differences in coaching purpose do not directly connect to differences in the motivation to become or continue as a vaulting coach.

## **Discussion**

### *Becoming a Coach*

The purpose of this study was to identify the primary motivations to become and continue as a vaulting coach. The theme of intrinsic motivation came through very strongly in the comments regarding volunteerism and leisure. With no significant financial reward or other extrinsic tangible outcome, these coaches all indicated an intrinsic desire to be involved with vaulting and identified personal meaning with coaching. This establishes the voluntary nature of coaching vaulting. These results support Stebbins' (2011) research on intrinsic motivation and his identification of volunteerism as a form of serious leisure. Volunteer motivation is closely associated with CET task and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1991). These findings match previous research related in compensation and volunteerism (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; Kim & Chelladurai, 2008; MacLean & Hamm, 2007). In addition, this reflects a strong commitment to the sport and the autonomous nature being a volunteer coach. The emotion with which responses were shared and the wording chosen reinforce the intrinsic motivation of these coaches.

Although sport coaches may receive some financial stipend for their coaching, the amount of income tends to be negligible (Wilson, 2004). This lack of monetary gain establishes their role as that of a volunteer coach. In order to understand the motivation of sport coaches, it is important first to understand the motivation behind the voluntary aspect of this role. People may choose to participate in a particular leisure activity, like being a volunteer coach, because they find the activity interesting or because the activity provides some personal benefit. Volunteering, being self-determined and autonomous by definition is assumed to also be personally meaningful (Caldwell, 2005). For sport volunteers, the level of personal meaningfulness is connected to the interaction between role, environment, and satisfaction (Silverberg, 2004). Satisfaction reinforces initiative, and is strengthened when internal motivation and participation occur over a long period of time (Watts & Caldwell, 2008).

For volunteers to continue in their role, they have to contribute their time, commit to being trained, and be willing to put effort into the role, all without receiving any significant financial compensation. This active pursuit of volunteerism has been linked by many researchers to intrinsic motivation (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; Kim & Chelladurai, 2008; MacLean & Hamm, 2007). Understanding how to support and enhance these intrinsic motivational drivers can assist sport organizations in developing and expanding their volunteer base. Sport organizations are continually challenged to recruit, train and retain qualified and talented volunteers. The need for volunteers with specific skills to take on various professional type roles within the leadership and management of sport organizations, coupled with people having less time to volunteer,

are key pressures in the world of sport volunteers (Engelberg, Skinner, & Zakus, 2006). These pressures can have a profound impact on the attitudes and behavior of volunteer coaches (Nichols, Taylor, James, Holmes, King, & Garrett, 2005).

Similar to paid staff, volunteer coaches who are identified to have low motivation tend to have low morale and high turnover. Conversely, those identified to have high motivation tend to have high morale and low turnover (Wilson, 2004). This reinforces the need for sports organizations to understand an individual's motivation to become and stay a volunteer coach. In light of the rising attrition rates in volunteer coaches and the importance of this issue to the future of sport organizations, this is an area needing the attention of researchers (Gray & Wilson, 2010). Additionally, since the motivation of coaches to coach is a new direction for research in the venue of any of the equestrian sports, it may provide the groundwork for future studies.

Another key factor of intrinsic motivation is that of autonomy. Autonomy in volunteerism is a theme previously identified by Caldwell (2005) and autonomy also connects to the first proposition of CET. This sense of self-determination was identified through responses related to why participants first became a coach, what factors have caused them to continue coaching, and identifying what factors might cause them to stop coaching. These responses clearly reflected the choice factor of coaching. A few of the participants entered into the coaching role in order to fill a need, either they wanted to continue having opportunities to vault themselves or they wanted the vaulting club to continue so their child could continue to vault. These reasons for entry were also referenced as a reason given by all the participants for continuing as a coach.



Self-determination and free choice are key elements of intrinsic motivation and of autonomy, as described in CET. These coaches enthusiastically expressed their free choice in being involved and the freedom to select the type and level of involvement they pursue. Most of the coaches wished they had more time to be involved and wished they had discovered the sport earlier in their life. These desires support the definitional elements of autonomy as a function that allows participants to choose the type of activity they engage in and the level of involvement in those chosen activities (Baard, 2002).

Within the group of participants that entered into coaching in order to ensure that their vaulting group continued, all of them noted that they would be willing to give the role of coaching over to someone else provided that they could continue their involvement with the sport. This indicates that the participants' commitment to the sport of vaulting itself is much greater than their desire to coach. Although these participants stated that it was their own choice to become a coach, the level of autonomy and degree of intrinsic motivation in making this choice can be debated. This potentially contradictory finding on commitment needs further research in order to gain clarity on motivation in the decision to coach.

There are a few reasons that might explain why these volunteers describe themselves as not being externally influenced to become a coach yet express a desire to forfeit the role. It could be that the role of being a volunteer ranks higher within their personal goals than the role of being a coach. It could be that the desire to be involved with the sport of vaulting is the primary motivation and that coaching is just a means to that end. It could be that they are committed to the success of the vaulting club and

believe they can support that success by serving as the coach. Many other possible explanations may exist making this motivational contradiction worthy of deeper exploration.

### *Continuing as a Coach*

Vaulter success was identified through what they find most rewarding and most challenging in being a coach, and through descriptions of their personal coaching philosophy. These responses reflected the non-tangible outcomes that are desired from coaching. Participants were unanimous in finding the success of the vaulters as the most rewarding factor in being a coach. None of the participants identified a competitive success, but instead they focused on the vaulters personal sense of accomplishment and discovering the “ah ha” moments in their ability and/or confidence. Coaching philosophies centered upon safety, fun, and helping the vaulters believe in themselves.

The interviews all showed how the rewards of coaching are not measured by awards won, but by what is learned and the skills achieved by the vaulters. Smiles given at the recognition of the successful completion of a skill or seeing the light bulb go off as knowledge and theory connect are both forms of feedback that these coaches rely on to measure success. This illustrated that coaches evaluate their success by the feelings of success expressed by their vaulters. Vaulter success becomes a source of informational feedback by which the coaches evaluate themselves. This feedback also becomes a motivating source for the coach to increase their commitment to increasing their own knowledge and skills in order to better support the vaulter and thus increase the likelihood of increased vaulter success (see Figure 5).

*[Insert figure 5 here.]*

This type positive feedback increases intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985a) and can be related to the informational rewards of CET. This creates a cycle where the more positive feedback is received, the stronger the intrinsic commitment to coaching becomes; the stronger the commitment to coaching is, the greater the desire is to learn more and to increase once sense of competence; the higher the level of competence a coach has, the more likely they are to instill confidence and success in their athletes. This becomes a circle of motivation and outcomes supporting each other. The circle strengthens the belief that the reward is in the experience rather than the outcomes, connects to the task orientation of CET, and reinforces the intrinsic nature of these vaulting coaches.

One of the key factors in vaulter success, education, evolved from how participants gained the skills and knowledge to be a coach, and whether or not the role of the coach is part of their identity. The interview responses reflected the participants desire to feel knowledgeable as a coach. Even though the participants interviewed came into their coaching roles with varying amounts of experience and had been coaching for various amount of time, every single participant expressed a desire to continue learning about the sport and how to improve their knowledge and skills.

Although the more geographically isolated coaches reported relying heavily on books and the internet, especially in their beginning years, every participant identified personal observation of another's coaching strategies to have the most impact on their own coaching. Despite the fact that participants were in very different settings and had a

large discrepancy in the resources available to them, they all took advantage of learning opportunities in order to be the best coach they could. A strong sense of competence is a result of cumulative education and learning experiences (Elliot, McGregor & Thrash, 2002).

Competence is also an element of CET, proposition two, and self-efficacy. Participants expressed an eagerness to learn everything they could about the sport of vaulting as a whole, about the technical side of vaulting skills, about the artistic aspects of performing vaulting, and about the training of the horses. This eagerness was defined as important not as part of an effort to be seen by others as highly skilled, but in an effort to provide their athletes with the best information and strategies to become a better vaulter. The need to be competent was directly linked to how these coaches believed they could attain success. And the coaches defined their success by the success of their athletes.

Opportunities to witness vaulter success were a stronger force than any of the challenges these coaches faced. Challenges varied from finding time to coach, to dealing with parents, to keeping vaulters focused and motivated. Identifying their challenges along with what inspires them to continue coaching and what might cause them to stop coaching led to the factor of commitment related to vaulter success. All of the participants noted a purpose that focused on a love of the sport and/or a love of the children. None of the desired outcomes reflected personal success; the outcomes all focused on the personal growth and achievement of the vaulters.

These coaches are clearly committed to coaching and did not express any concern for the sacrifices they have to make in order to coach or the personal recognition they might receive from coaching. This speaks to their motivation to coach for the sake of coaching and that the act of coaching is both the goal and the reward. The focus of these coaches provided clear support for task orientation in CET and the expectancy theory. This aligns with research by Deci and Ryan (2002) that indicated that those who are more invested in the task itself than in their own ego have higher levels of intrinsic motivation, by Martens (1990) who states that people who are intrinsically motivated evaluate success by their ability to master the task.

These interviews clearly revealed that intrinsic motivation is the primary force behind one entering into and continuing on as an equestrian vaulting coach. The themes of intrinsic motivation (including volunteerism, leisure activity and autonomy) and vaulter success (including education and competence) can be easily connected to the motivational theories of cognitive evaluation, expectancy, and self-efficacy. Many of the volunteerism aspects found can also be linked to the intrinsic motivation work of Stebbins (2011) and Caldwell (2005).

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to identify the primary motivations for people to become and continue as equestrian vaulting coaches. Explanations of motivations provided strong support for the voluntary and intrinsic nature that drives vaulting coaches to initiate and sustain their action. The interviews revealed that these coaches have a strong commitment to the sport and thrive in their autonomy as a volunteer. There was a

consistent desire to have resources, especially time, to expand their commitment and participation in the sport of vaulting. Coaches expressed a thirst for continual improvement of their skills, with the primary purpose of being able to transfer those skills into improved performance of their vaulters. This objective for improvement stemmed from the enjoyment gained in witnessing their vaulters succeed. The key factors of autonomy, education, and commitment can all be related to the individual propositions of CET. Add to that concept of volunteerism and it can be concluded that the motivations of equestrian vaulting coaches are solidly based in intrinsic motivation.

#### *Practical Applications*

This study also provides avenues for this research to be applied to the management of volunteer coaches by sports organizations. Ensuring that volunteer needs are being met will increase the likelihood that they will remain a volunteer for an extended period of time. According to McKee & McKee (2008), "motivation is an inside job. People do things for their reasons, not yours, so our role is to create an organizational culture that stimulates the inner motivation of each volunteer" (p. 68). Connecting the motivational factors identified by this research on equestrian vaulting coaches to volunteer management provides organizations with specific strategies they can apply to the development of coaches (see Figure 6). Common elements of volunteer management include identification, selection, orientation, training, utilization, recognition, and evaluation.

*[Insert figure 6 here.]*

An entire industry has grown out of the identification and selection process when applied to consumerism. Commercial advertisers understand the importance of knowing their audience and developing marketing strategies that will directly appeal to each target audience. The same concept also applies to the identification and selection of volunteer coaches. Knowing the type of coach an organization needs and finding someone who not only matches those characteristics but also has personal motivations for being involved will greatly contribute to both recruitment and retention factors. This research has identified where recruitment has been successful: filling a need, continued involvement, and creating opportunities for others. These three factors should be used in recruitment efforts in conjunction with the primary outcome identified: contributing to the success of the vaulter. These motivations relate to the autonomy and task propositions of CET.

The motivation and philosophy of coaches is a key factor in the success of a sport program. Coaching philosophy is typically based on environmental influences, personal attitudes, beliefs, and values. Having a coaching philosophy is important as the standards for acceptable behavior needs to be set and modeled by the coach (Lumpkin & Cuneen, 2001). It is important that sport coaches have examined what they value and can demonstrate these values through everyday actions and decisions. The development of a coaching philosophy may be reflective of the motivational factors behind the decision to coach. Assisting coaching in identifying their personal coaching philosophy, based on their personal motivations, and linking both those motivations and the philosophy to the goals of the organization is a critical step in the orientation process. These motivations relate to the competence and task propositions of CET.

Training motivations represent the competence proposition of CET. Coaches identified personal experiences working with another coach and watching other coaches as the learning experience they most desired and that created the strongest learning impact for them. Coaches also indicated a need for more of these interactions therefore training programs should be designed that offer personal mentoring and networking opportunities. Training opportunities should be provided on an ongoing basis as coaches expressed a strong desire to constantly be learning more. For coaches, the motivation to continually increase their knowledge and skills appears directly related to their desire to see each vaulter continually achieve new heights of success.

Utilization strategies lie at the intersection of CET propositions competence, feedback and task. Utilization involves the exploitation of motivation into action, and that action is sustained based on the continual input of rewards that are motivationally meaningful. The organization must be successful in matching motivation to roles, providing motivational connections for involvement, providing the training and resources needed to be competent, and providing opportunities for coaches to actively participate, all before quality utilization can occur. The continued utilization is dependent upon the feedback received throughout participation. This highlights the interdependent nature of the motivational elements in the volunteer management.

Like identification and selection, recognition and evaluation are connected elements. Coaches gauge their success by the successful learning and skill development of their vaulters. The motivation of the coach and the success of the vaulter have a cyclical relationship where the vaulter success drives a corresponding level of motivation



in the coach. The intrinsic motivations of the coach are based on how the coach evaluates the success of their vaulters. At the same time, organizations need to be evaluating the motivation of the coach. This evaluation will help organizations retain coaches by ensuring the motivational needs of the coach are being met. If those needs are not being met, the organization must go back to the selection stage and find a new role for the coach that meets these new motivations. Successful volunteer coaching management is dependent upon knowledge of and appropriate application of each individual's motivation.

### *Limitations*

This study has two key limiting factors – coverage error and researcher bias. The interview participant selection process, a convenience sample, has potentially high coverage error. By only using coaches who were registered members in the national sports organization for vaulting, which has historically had a focus on cultivating a competitive membership, the results may be heavily skewed by competitive motivations. This limits the accuracy of those involved with no interest in competition and who are solely coaching recreational or adaptive vaulters. As with any qualitative study, researcher bias is a limiting factor. As an insider to the sport of equestrian vaulting the researcher has personal experiences and relationships that have shaped existing perceptions. These perceptions may influence the interpretation of motivations and the co-constructions of shared meanings.

### *Future Research*

In the process of identifying what drives these coaches to coach, areas of motivational support that were lacking were also identified. These supports were challenges for them to overcome in order to sustain their involvement and should be explored more fully by sport organizations seeking to retain and grow coaches. Areas of organizational weakness that counter motivation include lack of personal mentors from the initial point of entry. Hudson (1999) states that the mentoring relationship is the most profound way for people to learn from one another. These mentors could provide education and networking connections, coaching apprenticeship or shadowing opportunities, how-to videos designed for coaches, and organizational acknowledgement of the voluntary aspect of coaching. Strengthening these organizational elements would both support and enhance the intrinsic motivation of volunteer coaches.

Other areas for expanding this research could be an examination of male coaches and comparing motivation of females and males. Further research is also needed regarding how coaching programs can strengthen their social networking aspects as a way to increase the ability for coaches to support and learn from each other. This is a key aspect in developing competent coaches given that personal observation of and interaction with a more experienced coach was identified as the preferred method of education. Another area for potential research is comparing the levels of motivational commitment between those who coach in facilities they own versus coaches that must use facilities owned by a third party. Each of these research areas would help to build the literature while potentially providing new insights into the motivation of coaches.

This research contributes to the limited research literature related to the motivation of coaches, the voluntary nature of sports coaching, and to the sport of equestrian vaulting overall. The results of this study provide broad support to the study of motivation and sports coaching. It also provides specific insight into the sport of equestrian vaulting. Furthermore, the application of these insights into a vaulting organization has the potential to transform recruitment, training and retention strategies.

<sup>1</sup>. Equestrian vaulting is the sport of dance and gymnastics on the back of a moving horse.

<sup>2</sup>. All names are pseudonyms.

## Figures

Figure 1. Respondent demographics by primary coaching area from preliminary survey.

	Competitive (n=98)	Recreational (n=49)	Therapeutic (n=9)	Total (n=157)
Coaching for 6 years or less	33%	56%	78%	42%
Coaching for over 6 years	67%	44%	22%	58%
Coaches who Currently Vault	30%	31%	44%	31%
Coaches with Past Vaulting Experience	61%	51%	0%	54%
Coach is a Vaulting Parent	46%	29%	33%	40%
Coaches who are a Current Equestrian Instructor	35%	47%	56%	40%
Coaches with Past Equestrian Instructor Experience	48%	78%	56%	58%
Coaches who Currently Coach Other Sports	13%	6%	0%	10%
Coaches with Past Other Sports Coaching Experience	44%	16%	56%	37%
Coaches whose Primary Income is Coaching Vaulting	4%	2%	22%	4%
Coaches whose Primary Income is Equestrian Based	19%	33%	44%	25%

Figure 2. Summary of motivational data means from preliminary survey.

	Competitive	Recreational	Therapeutic	All Types	Rank
<b>Autonomy</b>	4.71	4.66	5.00	4.64	1
<b>Competence</b>	4.5	4.4	4.41	4.35	3
<b>Feedback</b>	4.03	4.10	3.80	4.00	4
<b>Task</b>	4.58	4.56	4.46	4.37	2
<b>Range</b>	.68	.56	1.2	.81	

Figure 3. A framework for the thematic analysis of qualitative data (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

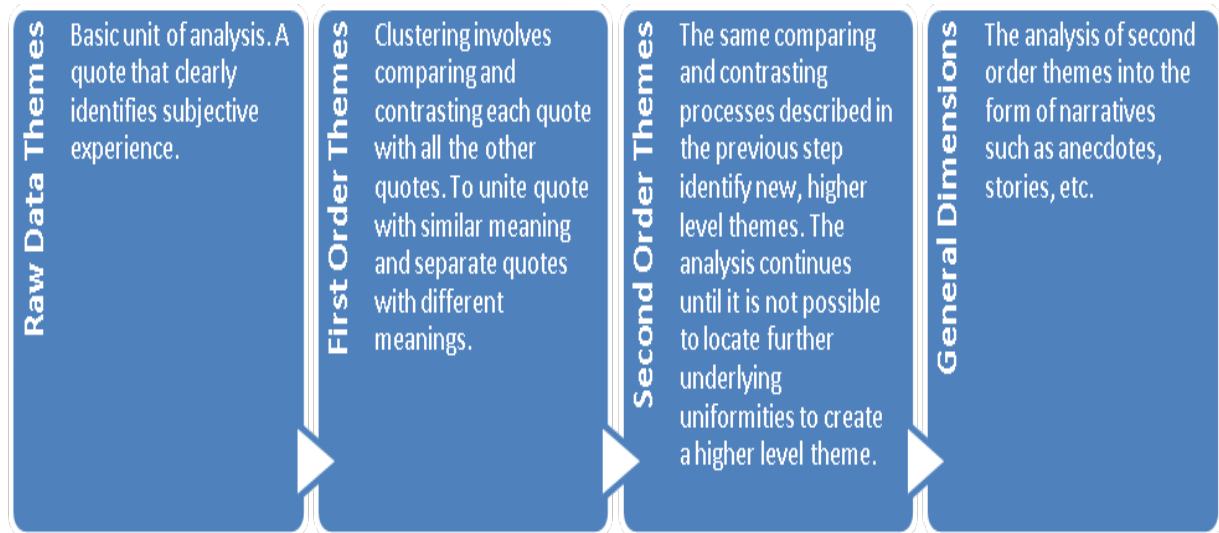


Figure 4. Overview of results to the research questions.

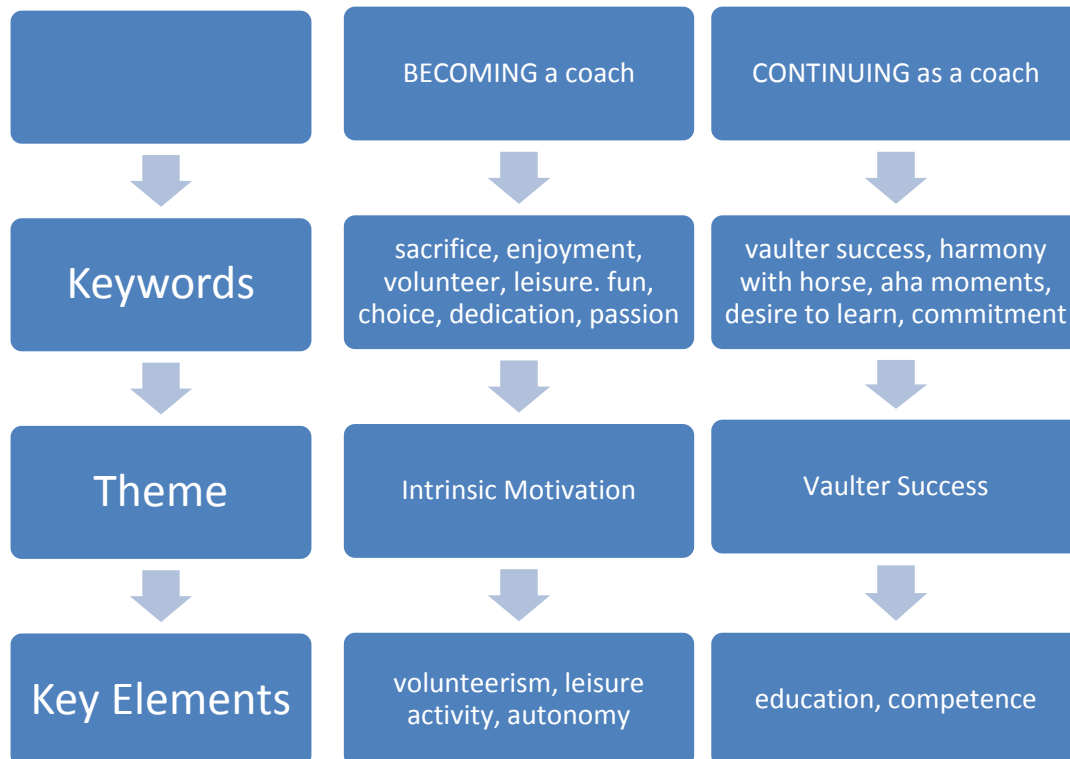


Figure 5. Vaulter success and coaching motivation loop.

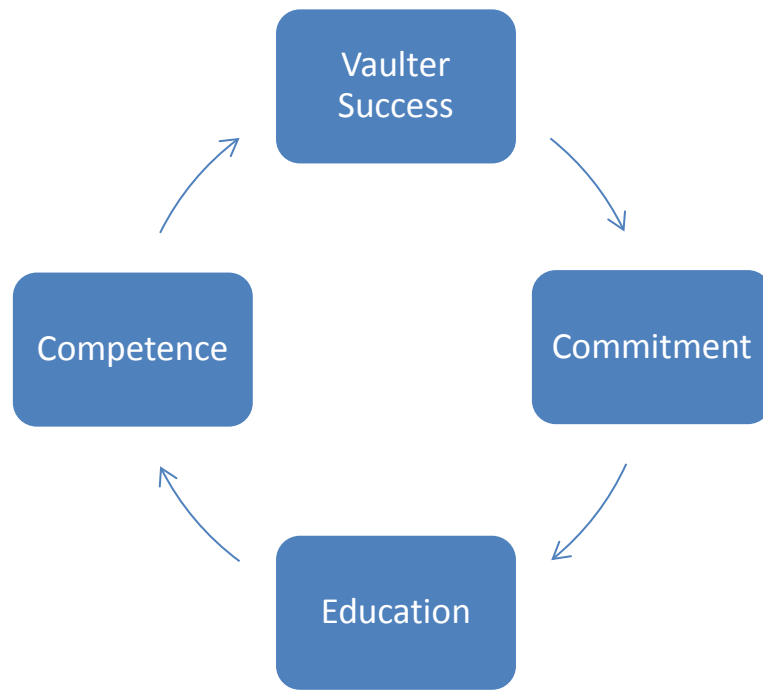


Figure 6. Application of coaching motivation to volunteer management strategies.

<b>MODEL</b>	<b>IDENTIFIED MOTIVATIONS (CET)</b>	<b>APPLICATION TO STRATEGIES</b>
<b>Identification</b>	Getting involved to fill a need, to continue involvement, to create opportunities for self and others to be involved; personal desire to help others be successful (autonomy, task)	Recruiting to specific audiences; understanding what motivates your audience; using audience motivations for appeal; highlighting outcomes
<b>Selection</b>	Understanding how contribution will fill a void, allow for involvement, and create opportunities for others; understanding personal impact on others (autonomy, task)	Carefully matching individual motivations to specific roles; ensure that roles will be personally meaningful and rewarding to the individual
<b>Orientation</b>	Desire to connect with other coaches and build personal relationships; desire to feel as if involvement will lead to vaulter success(competence)	Using audience motivations and philosophy to build commitment to both the role organization; clearly link how role supports the organization
<b>Training</b>	Desire for continued learning I order to better coach vaulters; want to learn from other coaches; prefer experiential learning opportunities; desire resources (competence)	Provided continued professional development activities; focus on peer to peer education; provide face to face opportunities that are supported with video and text
<b>Utilization</b>	Want opportunities to get and continue involvement; want involvement on their own terms, to meet their personal interests (competence, feedback, task)	Identify how personal motivations will be achieved by individuals role; provide multiple opportunities for specific role, or variations of it
<b>Recognition</b>	Want to feel they have made an impact on the knowledge, skill, and life of the vaulter; want to see the vaulter succeed; desire recognition that is reflective of vaulter success (feedback)	Match recognition to motives for involvement and incentives that align with motivations for continued involvement; rewards must be personally meaningful; create ways for vaulters to thank coaches
<b>Evaluation</b>	Want to share success with other; want to continue being challenged and learn to overcome those challenges (autonomy, competence, feedback, task)	Use evaluation as a motivational checkpoint; if motivations have changed, explore new roles that will provide for meaningful continued involvement

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## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this research was to identify the primary motivations for people to be volunteer equestrian vaulting coaches. Using a nomothetic context for research, this study focused on gaining a better understanding of equestrian vaulting coaches by identifying causal factors that generally motivate their engagement in the sport. The results of a preliminary survey, along with previous literature related to volunteer coaching motivation, provided the justification for using CET as a framework from which to build the phenomenological interview methods.

This research explored the primary motivational factors for becoming and continuing as an equestrian vaulting coach. One of the significant outcomes of this research is its contribution to the literature related to motivational theory, volunteer motivation, sports volunteers, and equestrian vaulting. These contributions encompass unique approaches, unique applications, and foundational research in equestrian sports. The research results themselves provide insight into how to encourage the motivation of volunteer coaches to engage and sustain involvement and how knowledge of these motivations can be used in management strategies to increase coach recruitment and retention.

### Key Findings

The preliminary survey provided statistical background information on vaulting coaches. Demographic questions revealed that 31% of coaches also currently engage in vaulting themselves, while 54% of coaches have past experiences as a vaulter, and 40% of coaches have a child who vaults. Ten percent of vaulting coaches are also currently coaching another sport, while 37% of coaches have previous experience coaching another sport and 58% have previous experience as instructors in another equine discipline. The respondents' vaulting coaching experience is divided fairly equally, with 42% coaching for six years or less and 58% who have been coaching for over six years. With 96% of coaches reporting that coaching equestrian vaulting does not serve as their primary source of income, the results indicate that coaching vaulting is a leisure pursuit to which coaches provide a volunteer service. Despite the fact that 40% of all the responding vaulting coaches are also currently instructors in another riding discipline, only 25% of those coaches derive their primary income from the overall equestrian industry.

The explanatory aspect of the interviews showed how equestrian vaulting volunteer coaches have transitioned into coaching and how intrinsic motivation played a role in the process. The fifteen female coaches selected for the interviews were chosen based on the following criteria: the coach self-identified as a coach with the American Vaulting Association, the coach was easy for the researcher to access via technology, the coach was hospitable to the inquiry, the coach was willing to verify the accuracy of the interview transcript, and the situational uniqueness of the coach. Elements of situational uniqueness included gender (only females were interviewed), geographic location, level of coaching experience and variety in coaching purpose (competitive, recreational,

therapeutic or mixed purposes). No male coaches were selected due to the limited number of male coaches available and challenges in meeting the situational criteria.

The qualitative interviews provided rich data into the motivation to become and to continue as a coach. Entry into coaching the sport of vaulting was delineated into three primary sources: filling a coaching void in an established vaulting program, developing a vaulting program in order to continue one's past involvement in the sport, or developing a vaulting program after casual exposure to the sport. Coaches' education was more dependent upon whether or not the participant had prior knowledge of the sport rather than the proximity of another vaulting program. Those with vaulting experience relied primarily upon observation of other coaches, which was the most strongly desired method of learning across all the participants. Those participants without prior vaulting experience relied most heavily on books for their education.

Rewards and challenges were very vaulter-centric. One of the rewards cited by every participant dealt with the success of the vaulter. These successes included skill attainment, increased understanding of the sport, improved social relationships with their teammates, and a greater sense of self-confidence.

Using CET to frame these explanations of motivations provided strong support for the voluntary and intrinsic nature that drives vaulting coaches to initiate and sustain their action. In the process of identifying what drives these coaches to coach, they also identified areas of motivational support that were lacking. These supports were challenges for them to overcome in order to sustain their involvement and should be explored more fully by sport organizations seeking to retain and grow coaches. Areas of

organizational weakness that counter motivation include lack of personal mentors from the initial point of entry that can provide both education and networking connection, coaching apprenticeship or shadowing opportunities, instructional videos designed for coaches, and organizational acknowledgement of the voluntary aspect of coaching. Strengthening these organizational elements would support and enhance the intrinsic motivation of volunteer coaches.

A final key finding was that no identifiable differences were found between coaching purposes in relation to motivation. Regardless of whether the coaches' purpose of teaching was defined as competitive, recreational or therapeutic, no connections were found between purpose and motivation. Although coaches had varying definitions of the type of coaching they were engaged in, they all had the shared desired outcome of seeing their athletes succeed. The factors that showed having the most significant influence on motivation related to informational feedback, level of experience in the sport, and level of training support available.

### Conclusions

Intrinsic motivation came through very passionately in the interviews as reflected by the comments regarding volunteerism and leisure. With no significant financial reward or other extrinsic tangible outcome, these coaches all indicated an intrinsic desire to be involved with vaulting and identified personal meaning with coaching. These results support Stebbins' (2011) research on intrinsic motivation and his identification of volunteerism as a form of serious leisure. In addition, this reflects a strong commitment to the sport and the autonomous nature being a volunteer coach. Autonomy in

volunteerism is a theme previously identified by Caldwell (2005) and autonomy also connects to the first proposition of CET. This sense of self-determination was identified through responses related to why participants first became a coach, what factors have caused them to continue coaching, and identifying what factors might cause them to stop coaching. These responses clearly reflected the choice factor of coaching.

Understanding the voluntary nature and choice-fullness of coaching emphasizes the importance of having participant buy-in into the sports organization, its structure, and its policies. A thorough and empowering orientation to the organization may help to reinforce a coach's self-determination to be a volunteer. Additionally, allowing ongoing input to the decisions regarding the team and the organization as a whole could increase one's motivation to continue in the coaching role. By providing opportunities for autonomy, a sports organization may enhance the intrinsic motivation of its coaches.

Even though the participants interviewed came into their coaching roles with varying amounts of experience, every participant expressed a desire to continue learning about the sport as well as how to improve their knowledge and skills. This indicates a strong desire to continually learn more and to improve both technical and management skills while signifying a desire for increased competence. Coaches expressed an eagerness to learn everything they could about the sport of vaulting as a whole, about the technical side of vaulting skills, about the artistic aspects of performing vaulting, and about the training of the horses. This eagerness was defined as important, not as part of an effort to be seen by others as highly skilled, but in an effort to provide their athletes



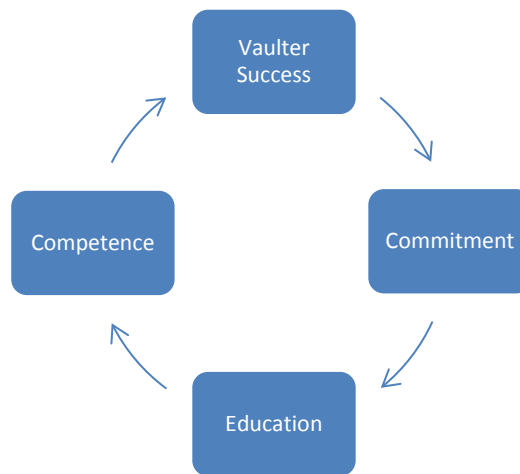
with the best information and strategies to become better vaulters. The need to be competent was directly linked to how these coaches believed they could attain success.

Although these coaches were in very different settings and had a large discrepancy in the resources available to them, they all took advantage of learning opportunities in order to be the best coach they could. The more geographically isolated coaches reported relying heavily on books and the internet, especially in their beginning years, yet every participant identified personal observation of another's coaching strategies to have the most impact on their own coaching. This supports the importance of coaching education in the form of videos (including vodcasts and video blogs) along with mentoring programs. It is highly likely that being a volunteer coach increases the preference for cooperative learning opportunities but a comparative study in learning methodology of coaching education programs for volunteer coaches versus paid coaches should be conducted to clarify this assumption.

Coaches in this study reflected on the importance of the non-tangible outcomes that are desired from coaching. Participants were unanimous in finding the success of the vaulters as the most rewarding factor in being a coach. None of the participants identified success as a competitive recognition, but instead they focused on the vaulters personal sense of accomplishment and discovering the "ah ha" moments in their ability and/or confidence. Coaching philosophies centered upon safety, fun, and helping the vaulters believe in themselves. The rewards of coaching are not measured by awards won, but by what is learned and the skills achieved by the vaulters. Smiles given at the recognition of the successful completion of a skill or seeing the light bulb go off as knowledge and

theory connect are both forms of feedback that these coaches rely on to measure success. This illustrates that coaches evaluate their success by the feelings of success expressed by their vaulters. Vaulter success becomes a source of informational feedback by which the coaches evaluate themselves (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Vaulter success loop for intrinsic motivation.



This creates a continuous cycle where the more that positive feedback is received, the stronger the intrinsic commitment to coaching becomes; the stronger the commitment to coaching is, the greater the desire is to learn more and to increase once sense of competence; the higher the level of competence a coach has, the more likely they are the instill confidence and success in their athletes. This becomes a circle of interactions where motivation and outcomes support each other. The more opportunities a coach can provide that will allow athletes, like vaulters, to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, the more opportunities there will be for the coach to gain feedback on the progress of the athlete. In this way, a coach can support their own intrinsic motivation by increasing the

amount of feedback they receive. Furthermore, this cycle aligns with the process motivators defined in the social cognition paradigm.

This study clearly revealed that intrinsic motivation is the primary force behind one entering into and continuing on as an equestrian vaulting coach. The themes of intrinsic motivation (including volunteerism, leisure activity and autonomy), education, and personal rewards (including commitment) can be easily connected to the theories of cognitive evaluation, expectancy, and self-efficacy, all of which are based in intrinsic motivation. The more strategies sports organizations incorporate into their structure that support intrinsic motivation, the higher the level of coaching interest and continuity they are likely to see in return. Therefore expenditures into supporting the intrinsic motivations of coaches, the higher rate of return the organization will see on those investments.

#### Theoretical Contributions

CET has been extensively tested and supported in youth sport settings. This research shifted the theory of motivation from the youth participant, as previous studies have done, to that of the adult volunteer coach. Previous studies grounded in CET have typically focused on manipulating the four propositions to show how intrinsic motivation may be undermined. This research took a different approach in that it was designed to evaluate if the four propositions can enhance intrinsic motivation for coaches of equestrian vaulting. Thus CET was used to confirm the supportive intrinsic motivational aspects of coaching.

Autonomy was shown to be a basic element in one's decision to become a volunteer coach and the freedom in making this choice indicates their commitment to continue in this role over time. The desire for competence was reflected in the coaches' willingness to seek ways to increase their knowledge and continually learn how to improve their coaching skills. Coaches measured their success by the informational feedback they received from their athletes and internalized vaulter success as their own. The passion these coaches find in the act of coaching represents their orientation to the task of this role. This highlights the connection between the four CET propositions and how they each work in concert to confirm and encourage the intrinsic motivation of these vaulting coaches.

This research provides an example of how CET can be used to examine the motivation of coaches and how all four CET propositions can be framed in such a way as to enhance intrinsic motivations. These unique approaches in applying CET as a theoretical research framework expand the body of motivation literature. This may lay the groundwork for other motivational theories, traditionally used with sport athletes, to be used with sport coaches. The ability to apply a single theory with both athletes and coaches allows for future research to clearly draw motivational connections between these two different participation roles. In addition, by focusing on the key elements that enhance motivation, sport organizations can more easily develop strategies based on what they should do, rather than what they shouldn't do.

Autonomy may be increased by providing a team approach to coaching so the roles and opportunities in coaching can be expanded into more choices. Just as football

may have separate coaches for defense, offense, kicking, and special teams, vaulting could have coaches who specialize in compulsory exercises, freestyles exercises, performance elements, and team dynamics. Competence could be increased by a formal mentoring program and positive feedback could be increased by alerting athletes and parents to its impact on the coach. Each of these strategies could increase the motivation of coaches and provide direct linkages between the theory of motivation and applied motivational influences.

### Sports Research Contributions

Research on coaches' motivation is sparse, so comparisons to past research are limited (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Past sports research has primarily focused on how coaches motivate their athletes. However, there has been a growing interest to understand what motivates coaches and officials involved in sport programs (Rainey, 1999). One trend that has driven this research direction has been the high rates of attrition in the numbers of sport coaches and officials (Deacon, 2001). In an attempt to curb attrition, attention has centered on retainment. Efforts towards retainment resulted in much of the research relating to the practical aspects of planning and managing volunteers in sports program (Cuskelly, 1995). Such programs may point out the importance of motivating and retaining volunteers, but don't identify the processes by which volunteers become committed to the sports organization.

This research examined both how coaches entered into their role as well as the factors that support their continued engagement. By examining the motivational aspects of both recruitment and retention, specific motivation supporting strategies can be

designed to reverse attrition and obtain growth in the overall number of volunteer coaches. Considering the importance of understanding attrition behavior in sport, the need for research into the motivational intentions of sports coaches has been cited (Gray & Wilson, 2010) and this research contributes to filling this deficit.

Since the motivation of coaches to coach is a new direction for research in the venue of any of the equestrian sports, it may lead to additional studies. Making the decision to become a coach of equestrian vaulting incorporates several motivational factors. Research has not been conducted that examines the motivational psyche that influences someone to coach vaulting – in general terms or in relation to a specific aspect of vaulting. Research on vaulting coaches in any context seems to be non-existent. In addition, a study comparing volunteer motivations of different coaching functions within the same sport setting has not been found. Although there did not appear to be motivational differences based on coaching function, similar research in other sports would need to be conducted to determine if this finding is unique to vaulting or not.

This research provides foundational research in the specific sport of equestrian vaulting and in the slightly broader field of equestrian coaching in general. This provides a starting point for exploring and comparing the coaching motivation within various equestrian disciplines. Furthermore, this research appears to be the first to compare coaching motivations for competitive, recreational and therapeutic purposes within the same sport. This opens the door for similar research within other sports and for comparisons between sports.

## Future Directions

Further research is needed to explore how the commitment to volunteerism and intrinsic motivation develops, and how this development may lead to sports coaching. Other areas of research could include comparing the leisure aspects of volunteerism and intrinsic motivation to the coaching of other equestrian sports and to other sports in general. All of these research avenues could contribute to both the research literature and be applied to improving sport management techniques.

As motivational research continues to build in the area of sports coaches and comparisons can be made between athlete motivation and coach motivation, it would be interesting to explore sports participation from a broader perspective. Are there significant motivational differences in sports participation amongst various role – athlete, coach, official, etc.? And if so, upon what factors do those differences align – demographics, societal influences, etc.?

The purpose of this research was to determine the primary motivational factors behind the engagement of being of volunteer equestrian vaulting coach. CET provided a clear framework for identifying motivational factors. This theory showed effectiveness in both the preliminary quantitative survey and in the core qualitative research. The results provide specific topics that can be linked to strategic sport management strategies.

## APPENDICES



## Appendix A. Qualitative Survey

### Motivation Factors of Vaulting Coaches

#### 1. Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this important survey. The purpose of this research survey is to determine the specific aspects of motivation behind being a vaulting coach. Any trends identified by the results will be shared with the AVA to use in developing recruitment, training, and recognition strategies for coaches. The more open and honest your responses are, the more effective the results will be. Remember, your individual results will be confidential.

Thanks so much for your participation. If you have any questions about this survey or would like more information about the overall research project, please contact Amy McCune or Skye Arthur-Banning at amymccune@gmail.com.

#### 2.

##### 1. Please respond to each statement by indicating your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I choose to coach vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am dedicated to coaching vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to spend time to coach vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to spend effort to coach vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### 3.

##### 2. Please respond to each question by indicating your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel challenged when I coach vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel successful when I coach vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel competent when I coach vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to keep improving my vaulting coaching skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to keep improving my knowledge of vaulting coaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to continue to learn more about vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### 4.

## Motivation Factors of Vaulting Coaches

### 3. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My vaulters tell me they enjoy my coaching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My vaulters tell me they think I am a good coach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My vaulters tell me they think I am a knowledgeable coach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Others tell me I am a good vaulting coach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Others tell me I am a knowledgeable coach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5.

### 4. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am happy being a vaulting coach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud to be a vaulting coach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like being a vaulting coach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is fun being a vaulting coach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy learning more about coaching vaulting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6.

### 5. My current primary vaulting coaching area is? (check only one)

- ☐ Competitive
- ☐ Recreational
- ☐ Therapeutic

### 6. My current secondary vaulting coaching area is? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Competitive
- ☐ Recreational
- ☐ Therapeutic
- ☐ I don't have a secondary area

## Motivation Factors of Vaulting Coaches

### 7. My original primary vaulting coaching area was? (check only one)

- ☐ Competitive
- ☐ Recreational
- ☐ Therapeutic

### 8. Indicate the number of years you have been a vaulting coach.

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-10 years
- ☐ more than 10 years

7.

### 9. Please indicate your involvement in the following statements.

	False	True
I currently vault.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been a vaulter in the past.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am the parent of a vaulter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am currently a coach or instructor in another equestrian discipline.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have coached or been an instructor in another equestrian discipline in the past.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I currently coach a non-equestrian sport.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have coached non-equestrian sports in the past.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coaching vaulting is my primary source of income.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The equine business is my primary source of income.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8.

### 10. What do you think prevents people from becoming vaulting coaches?

## Motivation Factors of Vaulting Coaches

**11. What do you think prevents people from joining the AVA?**

**12. OPTIONAL**

**Please indicate your AVA number. Only the researcher will have access to your number. This number will be used only for selecting and contacting the three coaches selected for follow up interviews. Once this study is complete, the numbers will be deleted to protect the confidentiality of your responses.**

## **Appendix B. Interview Background Information Form**

Name:

Primary coaching type:

Number of years coaching in primary type:

Was this your original coaching type involvement?

What other types of vaulting coaching have you been involved with in the past? (if any)

What types of non-vaulting coaching have you been involved with (past or present)? (if any)

If you are the parent of a vaulter, what are the vaulter(s) age and gender?

Do you have a coaching mentor?

Do you own a vaulting horse?

How close (geographically) is the nearest vaulting group to you?

How far do you travel to get to your coaching location?

What is the age range of your vaulting students?

How many hours per week do you coach?

## **Appendix C. Interview Consent Form**

### **Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study Clemson University**

#### **Exploring the Motivations of Coaches of Equestrian Vaulting**

##### **Description of the Research and Your Participation**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Skye Arthur-Banning and Amy McCune. The purpose of this research is to identify which aspects of intrinsic motivation are factors in coaching equestrian vaulting and the relationship of these factors between competitive, recreational and therapeutic coaching. Your participation will involve participating in a phone interview. The amount of time required for your participation will be approximately 60-90 minutes and involve three to four telephone sessions. The case study will use semi-structured questions to explore the factors that led to and that have sustained the desire to coach vaulting.

##### **Risks and Discomforts**

There are no known risks associated with this research.

##### **Potential Benefits**

There are no known benefits to you that would result from your participation in this research. This research may help us to understand the motivations of equestrian vaulting coaches and that information may help in improving recruitment, training and recognition strategies in the sport of vaulting.

##### **Protection of Confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. You will be given the opportunity to review the information in your case study description and analysis prior to publication. Your name and state may be identified in publications.

##### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

##### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Amy McCune at Clemson University at 864-247-7224 or Dr. Skye Arthur-Banning at 864-656-2206. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or [irb@clemson.edu](mailto:irb@clemson.edu). If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC's toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

**Consent**

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.  
I give my consent to participate in this study.**

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this consent form will be given to you.

## Appendix D. Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the first time you remember seeing or learning about vaulting?
2. What made you decide you wanted to get involved with the sport?
3. How did this involvement lead you to become a vaulting coach? (relates to proposition 1)
4. How did you learn to be a coach? (relates to proposition 2)
5. What do you find most rewarding about being a coach? (relates to proposition 3)
6. What makes you want to continue coaching? (relates to proposition 4)
7. When you first started coaching your primary focus was competitive/recreational/therapeutic. How has this changed over time?
8. How has this multi-aspect of coaching changed you as a coach?
9. How would you describe your coaching philosophy?
10. Is this philosophy different depending on what you're coaching – competitive/recreational/therapeutic?
11. Do you think this philosophy has changed over time?
12. What else would you like me to know about you and your role as a vaulting coach?



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